

# PENN GSE

Fall 2018

Getting to the  
Core of Project-  
Based Learning

page 6

Learning to Lead

page 12

Policy, Practice, and Promise

page 18

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MAGAZINE | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Faces of Philanthropy / page 16 Leaders and Role Models / page 22 Thinking Like Historians / page 31



# PENN GSE

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

**Board of Overseers**  
David N. Roberts, W'84, *Chair*

Rajeev Amara, W'97  
Deborah L. Ancona, C'76, GED'77  
Brett H. Barth, W'93  
Wallace Boston, GRD'10  
Jolley Bruce Christman, GED'71, GR'87  
Lee Spelman Doty, W'76  
Beth S. Ertel, W'88, WG'92  
Emanuel A. Gonzalez-Revilla, W'88  
Joel M. Greenblatt, W'79, WG'80  
Wendy Marcus Greenfield, W'78  
Lisa Green Hall, W'87  
Marjie G. Katz, GED'90  
Lois M. Kohn-Claar, C'88, GED'88  
Douglas R. Korn, W'84  
Gustave K. Lipman, W'94  
Jeffrey S. McKibben, W'93  
Gregory A. Milken, C'95  
Matthew Vincent O'Malley, GED'95  
Andrea Jill Pollack, C'83, L'87, GED'17  
Michael J. Sorrell, GRD'15  
Navin M. Valrani, W'93, GED'18

*The Penn GSE Magazine* is produced by the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216. Reproduction of these articles requires written permission from Penn GSE. ©2018 by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. Please contact Penn GSE at 215-898-9704 for references. Please contact alumni@gse.upenn.edu to update your address.

Pam Grossman  
*Dean*

Melissa R. Calvert, GED'00  
*Publisher*

Juliana Rosati  
*Editor*

Jane L. Lindahl, GED'18  
*Contributing Editor*

**Editorial Board:**  
Jennifer Moore  
Abigail Nelson  
Jillian Ports, GED'18  
Kat Stein

Designed by Ten Eleven Design

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices. Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Franklin Building, Suite 421, 3451 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6205; or 215-898-6993 (Voice).

**On the cover and below:** Educators in the inaugural class of Penn GSE's Project-Based Learning Certificate Program compete to see which group will build the tallest tower from spaghetti. Photos by Ginger Fox Photography



Image credits clockwise from top right: Ginger Fox Photography, Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, Ginger Fox Photography, Kevin Birch

## [ CONTENTS ]

**2** Letter from the Dean

[ NEWS ]

**3** Faculty Bookshelf & Faculty Awards

**4** News Briefs

[ FEATURES ]

**6** **Getting to the Core of Project-Based Learning**  
Penn GSE Supports a National Network of Teachers

**12** **Learning to Lead and Leading to Learn**  
Penn GSE Alumni as Senior Leaders at Penn

**16** **Faces of Philanthropy**  
Supporting the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*

**18** **Policy, Practice, and Promise**  
Professor Laura Perna on Opportunity and Higher Education

**22** **Leaders and Role Models**  
Educators Grow Through Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

**24** **Engaging Alumni**  
Penn GSE Boosts Opportunities for Graduates

**25** **Celebrating Educators**  
Alumni Weekend 2018

[ NOTEWORTHY ]

**26** Alumni Notes

[ RECESS ]

**31** Teaching Students to Think Like Historians





# Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is a time of change in education, and these days I often find myself imagining the future—of learning, of teacher preparation, and of our mission at Penn GSE.

One significant change is the shift toward project-based

and active forms of learning, in which students conduct projects during class and the teacher facilitates a complex process of creation, collaboration, and revision. When I spoke this fall in Singapore as the CJ Koh Professor at the National Institute of Education, I outlined the critical role that I believe teacher education programs must play in preparing educators for the classrooms of the future, which will rely increasingly on forms of active learning.

Another change in education is the growth of virtual and online education. This fall Penn held a summit, “The University of the Future,” bringing together stakeholders across industries and disciplines to examine how virtual and online learning affect our understanding of what it means to be a university. When I appeared on a panel with three other Penn deans, moderated by Provost Wendell Pritchett, I spoke about how students benefit from classroom interaction and collaboration that cannot be duplicated online. At the same time, I emphasized the need to extend our reach and impact through online learning.

I am proud of the role that Penn GSE is playing and will continue to play in preparing for and shaping the future of education. In our cover story for this issue, you will read about how the School is leading in teacher preparation for active learning through our new

Project-Based Learning Certificate Program. Another Penn GSE certificate program, VOLT (Virtual Online Teaching), has taken a leading role in preparing educators to teach online. We recently expanded its impact, partnering with the Aditya Birla Education Academy to help teachers in India implement online and blended teaching methods.

No matter what changes we make in classroom and online learning settings, their impact will be inadequate if we do not also expand access to college. In this issue you will read about how James S. Riepe Professor Laura Perna’s research is shaping the national conversation about higher education access. As Associate Professor Manuel González Canché noted at the Penn panel, true access begins with adequate academic preparation in the K–12 system. At Penn GSE, through our longstanding partnership with The School District of Philadelphia, we have embarked on an initiative to improve mathematics proficiency among District students, an essential part of college preparation.

Our vision of the future at Penn GSE also includes a state-of-the-art building expansion as part of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*. Members of our community gathered recently with Ann Beha Architects to begin discussing the early phases of schematic design and how the new spaces can reflect the School’s mission of advancing education locally, nationally, and globally. The architects asked us to complete a series of open-ended statements regarding our mission and our needs. When they asked us to consider “The future of education,” I knew immediately how I would complete the sentence: “The future of education will be shaped by Penn GSE alumni.” The most important way in which Penn GSE shapes the future is through the transformative educators and leaders we produce, who join our powerful and passionate community of alumni in improving education worldwide.

*Pam Grossman*

Pam Grossman  
Dean, Penn Graduate School of Education  
George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education

## FACULTY BOOKSHELF

### BOOKSHELF SPOTLIGHT

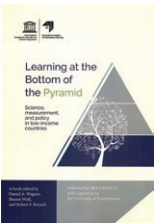
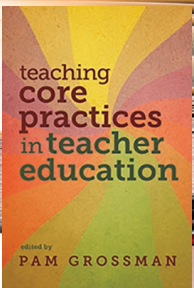
*Teaching Core Practices in Teacher Education*  
Edited by Pam Grossman

Published May 2018 by Harvard Education Press

In this book, Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman and her colleagues advocate for a type of practice-based teacher education that identifies a set of core practices of teaching and provides guidance for educators on enacting these practices. The authors argue that this approach to teacher education is key to enhancing current teachers’ professional skills and for supporting and nurturing new teachers. Examples of core practices include facilitating whole-class discussion, eliciting student thinking, and maintaining classroom norms.



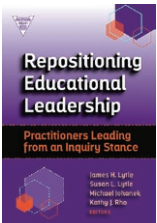
Dean Pam Grossman



*Learning at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Science, Measurement, and Policy in Low-income Countries*

Edited by Daniel A. Wagner, Sharon Wolf, and Robert F. Boruch

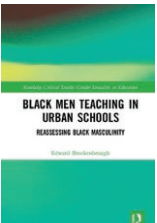
Published September 2018  
by IIEP-UNESCO



*Repositioning Educational Leadership: Practitioners Leading from an Inquiry Stance*

Edited by James H. Lytle, Susan L. Lytle\*, Michael C. Johaneck, Kathy J. Rho, GRD’16

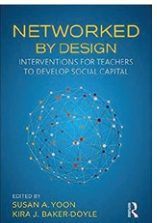
Published August 2018  
by Teachers College Press



*Black Men Teaching in Urban Schools: Reassessing Black Masculinity*

Ed Brockenbrough

Published June 2018  
by Routledge



*Networked by Design: Interventions for Teachers to Develop Social Capital*

Edited by Susan Yoon and Kira Baker-Doyle, C’97, GED’99, GR’08

Published June 2018 by Routledge

Names in **bold** are members of the Penn GSE faculty.  
A \* indicates a Penn GSE professor emerita/us.

## FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS

**John Fantuzzo** (1) was an invited master lecturer at the National Early Childhood Research Conference in July 2018 for his presentation “The Use of Child Outcome Data in Head Start.” **Pam Grossman** (above) gave a lecture, “Future-Ready Teachers for Future-Ready Learners,” in Singapore as the CJ Koh Professor at National Institute of Education. **Bobbi Kurshan** (2) was named a top 100 influencer by *EdTech Digest* in “State of EdTech 2017-2018: The Minds Behind What’s Now and What’s Next.” **Laura Perna** (3) received the Excellence in Public Policy in Higher Education Award from the Council on Public Policy in Higher Education. **Abby Reisman** (4) has been named executive editor of *Cognition and Instruction*. **Susan Yoon** (5) has been honored by the American Educational Research Association and the *American Educational Research Journal* as an Outstanding Reviewer.





# News Briefs



### Penn GSE Begins Expansion into Stiteler Building

Penn GSE has taken the first steps in an effort to convene the majority of the School’s programs, students, faculty, and staff on campus in one location. Renovations of the Stiteler building, which neighbors the School’s central location at 3700 Walnut Street, have made it possible for Penn GSE to begin using the second floor and areas of the first floor this fall. Stiteler is now home to Penn GSE’s Higher Education division and executive-format degree programs, including the Chief Learning Officer, Medical Education, Mid-Career Leadership, School Leadership, Independent School Teaching Residency, Education Entrepreneurship, and Urban Teaching Residency programs, which have relocated from leased locations off campus. As part of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign* launched in April, Penn GSE is planning a larger building project that will link 3700 Walnut Street and Stiteler, add a new entrance with a student pavilion (1), create a two-story adjoining building, and ensure full building accessibility. *See page 16 to learn more about the building project.*



### Alumni Weekend Highlights Voices in Education

Penn GSE’s Voices in Education program brought pressing issues in education to the forefront in May as part of the School’s annual Celebration of Educators during Penn’s Alumni Weekend. Distinguished education advocates Donald E. Graham and Joel Greenblatt, W’79, WG’80, discussed education’s biggest challenges in a conversation led by Dean Pam Grossman. Greenblatt, a member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers and co-founder of Success Academy Charter Schools in New York, referred to education as “the great equalizer” when discussing access to a quality K–12 education, while Graham, co-founder of TheDream.US, championed higher education access for DREAMers. Pictured (2) from left to right are **Dean Grossman**, **Joel Greenblatt**, and **Donald Graham**. *See page 25 to learn more about the event.*

### Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition Awards Ventures

Penn GSE hosted the ninth annual Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition in May. Cash prizes totaling over \$100,000 were awarded to several ventures seeking to make an impact on education. The winners included a platform to improve communication and feedback between teachers and mentors, a software for interventional autism treatment, an online space for teachers to curate new ideas and collaborate with other teachers all over the world, and an immersive program for learning American Sign Language. Finalists also had the opportunity to pitch their ventures to investors, researchers, and practitioners.

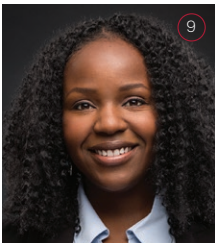
### Collaboratory for Teacher Education Launches with Panel

Penn GSE kicked off the newly launched Collaboratory for Teacher Education with a panel discussion in April entitled “Deepening Teacher Learning Across the Professional Continuum,” moderated by Dean Pam Grossman and featuring several other leaders in the field. Penn GSE Professor Janine Remillard, faculty director of teacher education, oversees the Collaboratory initiative, which has established a laboratory for the design, implementation, and study of experimental approaches to teacher education. The Collaboratory houses three unique teacher education programs at the School and will serve as a hub for learning and research in teacher education. Pictured (3) from left to right is the Collaboratory program team: **Kate Kinney-Grossman** (director, Urban Teaching Apprenticeship Program), **Janine Remillard**, **Chris Pupik Dean** (director, Independent School Teaching Residency), and **Alesha Gayle** (director, Urban Teaching Residency Program). *See page 6 to learn about the Collaboratory’s work in project-based learning.*



■ Penn GSE Associate Professor **Manuel S. González Canché** (4) was awarded a 2018 National Academy of Education/Spencer Post-doctoral Fellowship. The sixth Penn GSE faculty member to earn this award in the past five years, González Canché will focus his NAEd/Spencer project on identifying strategies to improve the democratizing function of community colleges. Penn GSE doctoral student Cameron Anglum, C’09, GED’14, received a Spencer Dissertation Fellowship for his research on the relationship between school district credit constraints, investments in public schools, and underserved student populations.

■ Adjunct Associate Professor **Caroline Ebby** (5) and Senior Lecturer **Caroline L. Watts** (6), director of school and community engagement, have received \$2,993,280 from the National Science Foundation for their four-year project “Building Sustainable Networked Instructional Leadership in Elementary Mathematics through a University Partnership with a Large Urban District.” The project will focus on The School District of Philadelphia’s vision for instructional improvement in mathematics, helping teachers and leaders translate it into classroom practice.



■ James S. Riepe Professor **Laura W. Perna** (7) and Penn AHEAD have received a \$300,000 subcontract from Research for Action on a project to evaluate free community college programs. Funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project is designed to advance understanding of free community college programs and to develop a framework for analyzing their costs and benefits. Dr. Perna is also co-leading another project funded by a \$600,000 grant from the Institute of Education Sciences. It will analyze the relationship between different types of financial aid programs and student progress through postsecondary education. *See page 18 to read more about Perna’s research.*

■ Dr. **Harris Sokoloff** (8) and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement (PPCE), in partnership with the Philadelphia Mayor’s Office of Education, designed and implemented a city-wide listening tour by the incoming Philadelphia Board of Education. The tour was intended to help new board members learn which issues matter most to Philadelphia students, educators, parents, and community members. A report by PPCE identifies key themes that arose during the tour, such as transparency, accountability, and community engagement. Sokoloff is faculty director of PPCE, now known as Catalyst Community Conversations. He is also director of the Center for School Study Councils.

■ Assistant Professor **Krystal Strong** (9) has received a Spencer Small Grant Award from the Spencer Foundation toward a project entitled “Education and Political Change: Mapping Contemporary School Protests in Africa.” The grant will support Dr. Strong’s research team as they complete the first comprehensive, cross-national database of the incidence and causes of school-based protests in Africa since 2000. The database will utilize interactive mapping technology and become accessible to global researchers and practitioners.

■ Professor **Susan Yoon** (10), with Blanca Himes and Matthew Breitenstein, both of Penn Medicine, has received a grant of \$1,036,108 from the National Science Foundation for the project “Professional Development Supports for Teaching Bioinformatics through Mobile Learning.” The project aims to help build an engaged population of students who are equipped with knowledge and skills in bioinformatics, an emerging field that combines biology with data analysis.

### Congratulations to the Recipients of... The 2018 Penn GSE Annual Awards

- Excellence in Teaching Award*  
Vivian Gadsden, William T. Carter Professor of Child Development and Education
- Lois MacNamara Award for Outstanding Service to Students*  
Amy Benedict, GRD’10, Director of Career and Professional Development
- The William E. Arnold Award for Outstanding Contributions by a Student*  
Lloyd Talley, GED’15, doctoral student
- Award for Excellence in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion*  
Uyen Ha, GED’18
- The Laurie Wagman Award for Visual and Performing Arts in Education*  
Aisha Bowen, GED’18
- The Jolley Bruce Christman and Steven S. Goldberg Annual Award for Best Dissertation in Urban Education*  
Sofía Chaparro Rodarte, GR’17

## IN THE MEDIA

*As leading voices in the field, Penn GSE faculty regularly weigh in on top issues in education. Here are a few highlights of their recent contributions in the media:*

“Better Teachers Are Needed to Improve Science Education” | *Nature* | October 3, 2018  
**Richard Ingersoll** comments on the importance of classroom practice for pre-service teachers in STEM fields.

“Geographical Bias in Testing: Is Cultural Bias a Problem of the Past or Are We Simply Not Looking in the Right Space?” | *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* | September 17, 2018  
**Manuel González Canché** discusses the problem of cultural and geographical biases in standardized college admissions tests.

“After Years of Watching Top Students Leave for Other States, U. of I. and Lawmakers Begin to Respond” | *Chicago Tribune* | August 27, 2018  
**Joni Finney** comments on new public policy initiatives in Illinois to increase college affordability and bolster need-based financial aid programs.

“How Do You Help Your Child in School Without Being a Helicopter Parent? Let’s Discuss.” | *The Tampa Bay Times* | July 26, 2018  
**Marsha Richardson** says the most important thing parents can do to support their children is to know them.

“Finding Refuge in Learning? The Emergent Role of Mobile Learning for Refugees on Lesbos” | *Forbes* | June 27, 2018  
**Bobbi Kurshan** discusses her experience teaching coding to refugees on the Greek island of Lesbos.

“Harness Potential of Low-income Students by Valuing What They Already Know” | *The Houston Chronicle* | June 7, 2018  
**Nelson Flores** discusses the importance of learning about and valuing the linguistic diversity and rich linguistic practices of students from low-income backgrounds.

“Preschools in Ghana’s Capital Challenge Call-And-Response System” | *NPR* | May 30, 2018  
**Sharon Wolf**’s groundbreaking work to transform Ghana’s preschools is showcased in this segment.

Names in **bold** are members of the Penn GSE faculty.

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/in-the-media](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/in-the-media) and follow @PennGSE on Twitter to stay up to date on Penn GSE in the media.



↓ Project-based learning places students at the center, fostering collaboration as students conduct projects during class.  
Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

# Getting to the Core of Project-Based Learning

## Penn GSE Supports a National Network of Teachers

by Juliana Rosati

Design a public park. Conduct a mock trial. Write a letter to the editor. These are just a few examples of the tasks students might undertake if their teacher embraces the recent shift toward active and project-based learning. Such approaches put students at the center, asking them to plan and produce projects during class rather than simply receive information from a teacher. Research reveals that learning in this way has clear benefits to students—such as increased engagement, greater academic growth, and better preparedness for college.

Yet project-based classrooms pose complex challenges for teachers. At any given moment, each student could be doing something different. One student might be making a drawing while another is building a model in three dimensions. One group might be struggling to assign roles to each member while another is looking for a good reference source. How can a teacher ensure that every student is learning academic content along with important skills such as taking initiative, working effectively in a group, and conducting research?

Penn GSE is taking the lead in helping educators across the country hone their skills in project-based instruction. Through a new certificate program and a related research project, the School is building a national network of teachers and leaders with the insight and experience to maximize active learning in their classrooms. This work is conducted in partnership with The School District of Philadelphia and two of its schools that have embraced project-based learning, The Workshop School (and its nonprofit affiliate Project Based Learning Inc.) and Science Leadership Academy schools (and its nonprofit affiliate Inquiry Schools), as well as the national organization EL Education.

Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman views this investment in educators as critical to the success of innovation in education. “The future of education depends upon an investment in the very human resource of teachers and leaders,” she says. “The most innovative idea or technology can’t transform teaching and learning without the presence of inspired, knowledgeable, and skilled educators.”

Matthew Riggan, GR’05, cofounder of The Workshop School, a project-based school in Philadelphia, sees the need firsthand. “There is a human capital problem in project-based learning,” says Dr. Riggan, a member of the certificate program’s advisory team. “Schools of education traditionally do not prepare people to teach in this way. Penn GSE’s commitment to addressing this issue is very important, both symbolically and practically.”

### A Vision of Ambitious Teaching

Designed for experienced educators who have already brought active learning to their classrooms, Penn GSE’s Project-Based Learning Certificate Program launched in August. The inaugural class is made up of forty-one teachers and five educational leaders. Participants represent public and independent K–12 schools in seven states and the District of Columbia, and teachers in the group boast an average of eleven and a half years of classroom experience. Rather than provide a specific curriculum for educators to use, the thirteen-month program emphasizes an often-neglected topic: the actions and decisions of effective project-based teachers.

“You could walk into two separate classrooms with two different teachers leading the exact same project and see very different things going on,” says Penn GSE Lecturer Zachary Herrmann, director of the Project-Based Learning Certificate Program. “Just having a high-quality project isn’t enough. What is the teacher doing in the moment to bring that project to life?”

That practical focus is rooted in the research of Dean Grossman, who has studied the essential, or core, practices of effective teachers for years. While a professor at Stanford she developed a tool for observing the





↑ Left to right: Drs. Zachary Herrmann, Christopher Pupik Dean, and Sarah Schneider Kavanagh make up Dean Grossman’s “dream team” for project-based learning. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

instruction of English teachers and helping them to improve. Her most recent book, *Teaching Core Practices in Teacher Education* (Harvard Education Press, 2018), advocates for components of effective teaching that have been identified through research. (See page 3 to learn more about Dean Grossman’s book.)

When it comes to project-based learning, Dr. Grossman believes it is critical to focus on instruction. Project-based learning was attempted unsuccessfully in the 1960s with a “teacher-proof” curriculum that was thought to reach students no matter what the teacher did to implement it. “That whole notion is problematic,” says Grossman. “Study after study has shown that you can’t teacher-proof a curriculum. A curriculum is always filtered through a teacher’s knowledge, skills, and beliefs.”

Because a project-based approach asks students to take responsibility for their own learning, the teacher’s role is no longer that of a lecturer but rather a facilitator and coach. To help prepare teachers for this challenge, Grossman co-led a research project with Penn GSE Senior Fellow Christopher Pupik Dean, GED’09, GR’12, director of the Independent School Teaching Residency program.

The researchers on Grossman and Pupik Dean’s team surveyed project-based teaching experts—university researchers, teachers, and leaders of educational organizations—and observed the classrooms of successful project-based teachers. “We collected a lot of video of the teachers and analyzed it to try to understand what it was that they were doing that created effective learning environments,” says Pupik Dean. The result was a set of core practices for project-based teachers—the foundation of the new certificate program, which strives to meet an emerging need across the nation.

“Anyone who works in education will tell you that implementing ambitious, student-centered instruction, such as high-quality project-based learning, is the right thing to do,” says Penn GSE Research Assistant Professor Sarah Schneider Kavanagh, who is conducting a study on the certificate program. “However, as schools and districts

begin to realize how difficult it is to do this kind of instruction well, one of the dangers is that they will say it doesn’t work. And it won’t work if they don’t support teachers.”

Grossman expresses great confidence that the “dream team” of Drs. Herrmann, Pupik Dean, and Kavanagh is equal to the challenge at hand. “Zachary is an incredible project leader with expertise in leadership and cooperative learning, as well as a background as an award-winning math teacher. Chris did the original research, has run Penn GSE’s independent school teacher education programs, and is an amazing educator. Sarah is a remarkable researcher who has focused for years on core practices and brings deep expertise in practice-based teacher development. I feel like we just could not have a better team,” she says.

### Opening the Classroom Door

Weighing the pros and cons of disposable drinking straws, writing a poem, and planning a “desert survival” strategy are just some of the projects that participants took part in when they convened on campus for a week-long Summer Institute to kick off their thirteen months in the Project-Based Learning Certificate Program.

“If we expect our teachers to create rich and powerful learning experiences for their students, we need to create rich and powerful learning experiences for teachers,” says Herrmann. The educators not only participated in the kinds of projects they might assign to students, but also worked together to improve the projects and try out new teaching strategies.

At the heart of the institute and the program is the set of core practices of effective project-based teachers identified in Grossman and Pupik Dean’s study. These include encouraging students to make their own choices, collaborate with their classmates, reflect upon and revise their own work, give and receive feedback, engage in higher-order thinking, build personal connections to their work, and make a contribution to the world, all while they learn the content and practices of academic subjects.

Rather than prescribe a specific course of action, the practices serve as a framework that teachers can apply as they make long-term and short-term decisions about their course content and what kind of guidance to offer their students across a variety of situations. For instance, students may be more likely to feel personally connected to a project and see it as contributing to the world if the teacher asks them to solve a real problem in their community. If students are struggling with a project, subtle prompts and purposeful questions from the teacher may help them to get back on track while still encouraging them to make their own choices.

“We’re helping teachers develop their discretion,” says Herrmann. “We want to build our teachers’ capacity to make thoughtful and effective in-the-moment decisions that support their students.”

Morning sessions of the institute, led by Herrmann, brought all forty-six participants together to consider the core practices through group work punctuated by periods of individual reflection. In the afternoons, participants separated into six teams based upon the subject they teach. Each team worked with a facilitator to role-play and brainstorm practical aspects of implementing the practices.

“As a teacher, you might not know what’s going on in the classroom across the hall,

“There is a human capital problem in project-based learning. Schools of education traditionally do not prepare people to teach in this way. Penn GSE’s commitment to addressing this issue is very important, both symbolically and practically.”

— Dr. Matthew Riggan, GR’05, program advisory team member and cofounder of The Workshop School

much less the one up two floors or across town,” says Meg Riordan, director of external research at EL Education and a member of the certificate program’s advisory team. As a contributor to the program’s design, Dr. Riordan took part in a year-long planning process involving individuals from over a dozen educational organizations in nine states. The outcome of that process, she says, is a structure that aims to open the classroom door so that teachers can learn from one another. “This program and the network it engenders give teachers a chance to make transparent some of the choices they are making behind the scenes that have an impact on students,” Riordan says. “You can report back to your team and say, ‘I experimented with something, and here’s how my students responded, and here’s the work they produced.’”

On the ground at their respective schools, the certificate program’s participants are now immersed in an academic year of putting their knowledge to work in their classrooms while continuing the Penn GSE program in a virtual format, regularly conferring with their facilitators and submitting videos of their teaching to an online platform so that their classmates can provide feedback.

Running parallel to the certificate program, a research project led by Kavanagh is gathering insights on the program’s impact. Prior to the program’s start, Kavanagh and a research team collected data on approximately half of the participants, including videos of their teaching and work that their students produced. The researchers will continue collecting such data, with the aim of identifying changes in the teachers’ practice and their students’ learning.

“We can reliably watch video of a teacher’s practice and determine whether or not that teacher is doing a lot or a little to support goals such as collaboration,” says Kavanagh. “As we watch videos of teachers over time, we will see the extent to which their skills in project-based instruction are growing.”

Pupik Dean adds, “We have built-in proof of concept. We’ll be able to demonstrate whether the program is effective or not from the research.” The results will point the way to enhancements of the certificate program as well as Penn GSE’s longstanding master’s programs in teacher education, all of which are now part of the

School’s recently launched Collaboratory for Teacher Education at Penn GSE. The Collaboratory has expanded Penn GSE’s offerings for teachers and aims to evolve its programs continually on the basis of research. (See page 4 to read more about the Collaboratory.)

### Creating a National Network

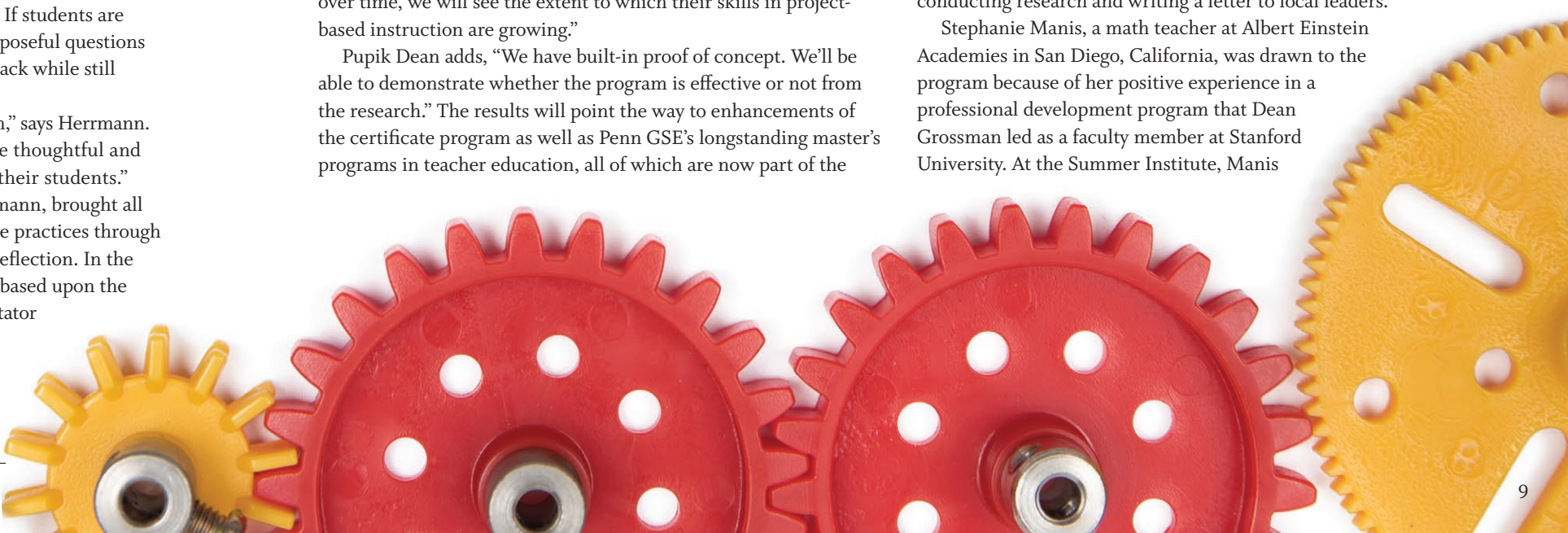
At the Summer Institute, participants expressed appreciation for their time together and what they could accomplish in the months ahead.

“This year is going to be an exciting opportunity to build really substantial connections with the teachers,” said Melissa Viola-Askey, the facilitator for the U.S. History team and a social studies specialist at the Prince William County Public Schools in Manassas, Virginia.

STEM team facilitator Alissa Fong, an instructional coach at Stanford Graduate School of Education and a former math teacher, said, “Often when teachers are evaluated at their schools, the feedback is not really actionable. In this program, teachers can say, ‘Here’s something I want to practice, and I know I’ll be successful when I see a certain result, and my facilitator will help me with challenges that arise.’”

Participant Marcelina McCool, a world language instructor at Philadelphia Military Academy, described the program as a “dream come true” and praised the ways in which it exemplifies a student-centered approach. “As participants, we are the makers and doers of the program, not just learners,” she said. “It provides a safe environment to share our strengths and weaknesses and receive feedback from faculty and educators who are so passionate.” During the week, McCool came up with an idea for a new unit that would ask her students to argue for or against the concept of sanctuary cities by conducting research and writing a letter to local leaders.

Stephanie Manis, a math teacher at Albert Einstein Academies in San Diego, California, was drawn to the program because of her positive experience in a professional development program that Dean Grossman led as a faculty member at Stanford University. At the Summer Institute, Manis







↑ Educators in the Project-Based Learning Certificate Program participate in projects similar to those they might assign to their own students. They also work together to improve the projects and try out new teaching strategies.



↓ Herrmann, director of the Project-Based Learning Certificate Program, addresses Summer Institute participants.  
Photos by Ginger Fox Photography

“This program has the potential to create a pipeline of educators who are able to think critically about what it means to teach in a modern world, and what it means to create classrooms that are more authentic and student-centered.”

— Chris Lehmann, program advisory team member and founding principal of the Science Leadership Academy

role-played classroom situations with her team and set a goal of teaching her students the skills of revision and reflection. “I realized that just producing a project only takes students halfway,” she said. “They also need to reflect on their work and revise it, so that by the end they have a collection of knowledge.”

Rachel Zulick, a science teacher at Northern High School in Durham, North Carolina, appreciated the program’s focus on the core practices of project-based teaching. “That gave me a very clear direction for project-based learning that I haven’t come across before,” she said. “Now I can identify which of the activities in my classroom have been true project-based learning, and I have the knowledge to transform the ones that weren’t,” she said.

Samuel Reed III, a humanities teacher at The U School in Philadelphia, valued the challenge of examining his teaching practice. “The program is pushing me to think more deeply about how to engage students, convey disciplinary content, and ensure equitable collaboration in groups,” he said. He looked forward to sharing his knowledge with colleagues at his school and beyond. “I hope we can become cheerleaders for project-based learning and encourage others to practice it well,” he said.

After months of bringing new approaches to their classrooms and confering with their teams, participants will conclude their time in the certificate program by returning to Penn GSE for a second Summer Institute. At the same time, a new group of educators will arrive on campus to begin the program. By building connections that are meant to last and enrolling a new cohort each year, Penn GSE aims to create a network of teachers and leaders who can meet the nationwide need for effective project-based learning.

“This program has the potential to create a pipeline of educators who are able to think critically about what it means to teach in a modern world, and what it means to create classrooms that are more authentic and student-centered,” says Chris Lehmann, a member of the program’s advisory team and founding principal of Philadelphia’s progressive, nationally recognized Science Leadership Academy.

For Dean Grossman, this kind of investment in teachers exemplifies a broader call to action. “We need to keep teachers at the center of the drive to improve education,” she says. “Let’s recruit some of the most innovative people in our society to teach. Then let’s support them and invest in their development—because the future of education depends upon them.” ■

Image credits: page 6 (iStock.com/Floortje), page 7 (iStock.com/rusm), page 9 (iStock.com/Jae Young Ju), page 11 (clockwise from top left: iStock.com/Zocha\_K, Ginger Fox Photography, iStock.com/ElenaFeodrina, iStock.com/kyoshino)

### Advancing Active Learning

While Penn GSE’s Project-Based Learning Certificate Program focuses on honing K-12 teachers’ skills in instruction rather than providing them with a specific curriculum to bring to the classroom, Penn GSE faculty have created curricula that advance active and project-based learning in a variety of subjects. Here are a few examples:



### Making Electronic Textiles

Students design and create items such as stuffed animals, wristbands, hats, and laptop sleeves and embed them with electronic components like LED lights and sensors when taking part in a unit on electronic textiles developed by Penn GSE’s Dr. Yasmin Kafai, Lori and Michael Milken President’s Distinguished Professor. Released across the country as part of the widely adopted Exploring Computer Science curriculum, the unit aims to foster creativity and community while students learn about coding and circuitry.



### Effecting Change Through Apps

Students think of a science-related problem in their community and design a mobile application to provide a solution when participating in a curriculum created by Penn GSE Professor Susan Yoon. Using a visual programming language called MIT App Inventor, students build apps that address issues such as nutrition, fitness, energy consumption, and recycling by encouraging responsible habits in their users. The curriculum seeks to teach science, coding, and good citizenship simultaneously.



### Reading Like a Historian

Rather than memorizing historical facts, students work together to evaluate the reliability of historical documents and learn to make claims backed by evidence through the award-winning Reading Like a Historian curriculum that Penn GSE Assistant Professor Abby Reisman helped develop. The curriculum focuses on engaging students in the process of inquiry that historians use when evaluating the multiple perspectives presented in historical texts. *Learn more about Reading Like a Historian on page 31.*



# LEARNING TO LEAD *and* LEADING TO LEARN

## PENN GSE ALUMNI AS SENIOR LEADERS AT PENN

by Karen Brooks

Every year, Penn GSE produces graduates who go on to influence higher education nationally and internationally as teachers, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, college presidents, and more. This includes alumni who shape the field without leaving their very own Ivy League alma mater. At Penn, employees who are GSE graduates put their skills to use within the University in a variety of ways. Here, we highlight five “home-grown” senior leaders at Penn who draw upon expertise they acquired in Penn GSE’s Higher Education division as they achieve professional success and make an impact on the nation’s higher education landscape.



### Putting Penn Graduates to Work



Seven years into her work as a college career counselor, Barbara Hewitt, GRD ’02, sought to deepen her knowledge of higher education institutions and the ever-evolving trends that affect them. She applied to Penn GSE’s Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration program to achieve just that.

“Universities are very complex and diverse places, and there were a lot of things I wanted to learn about accessibility, costs, tuition rates, and technology’s role in education,” recalls Hewitt, who had been working in career services at her undergraduate alma mater, Dickinson College. Serendipitously, a position that involved working with undergraduates in the College of Arts and Sciences opened in Penn Career Services just as Hewitt was accepted to GSE. She got the job, becoming a Penn student and employee at the same time.

Twenty years later, Hewitt is executive director of career services at Penn, a role to which she was promoted in August. Although she started her Penn career working with liberal arts students, she has spent the majority of her tenure as senior associate director of career services for the Wharton School, advising undergraduates throughout their job searches and managing a recruiting program that has included four hundred employers and thirteen thousand interviews per year. In her new role, she oversees career services operations for all Penn undergraduates and nine graduate schools. “I love having one foot in academia but also being involved in what’s happening with the larger economy,” she says. “We have to keep up with national trends in employment, and when a recession hits or a new work-related technology comes up, we keep students informed and prepared. It’s a great mix of education and what’s happening in the wider world.”

Hewitt’s dissertation focused on how academic achievement, extracurricular activities, and work experience influenced new graduates’ success in obtaining job interviews and offers. “It was nice to pursue my doctorate while working in this field as an employee; the things you learn are not so theoretical when you are coming to work every day and seeing the challenges institutions are facing,” she says. “I applied what I was learning in my degree program to my job all the time.”

Her new position requires her to shape career services programs institution-wide so they best meet the needs of all Penn students and graduates—an opportunity she finds particularly appealing. “At the end of the day, all of us at Penn want our students and alumni to achieve fulfilling careers. It’s nice to be a part of that process,” she says.

### Matching Talent with Opportunity



Jack Heuer, G’92, GRD’03, was all in when he learned that GSE professors Bob Zemsky and J. Douglas Toma wanted to introduce an Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program for senior leaders.

Currently vice president of human resources, Heuer had been working in HR at Penn for nearly twenty years when he joined the Executive Doctorate program’s first cohort in 2002. While he possessed expertise in the field of HR, he wanted to have a deeper understanding about the business of higher education.

“Before the Exec Doc program, I did not comprehend the broad spectrum of University operations such as the University’s development function and the role of the alumni relations staff. The program taught me how to be a better HR professional, but more importantly, it made me a better higher education professional,” says Heuer, who oversees all facets of HR administration at Penn, the largest private employer in the Philadelphia region. Last fiscal year, his teams managed 2,397 hires across the institution.

Heuer’s responsibilities vary significantly, but his primary focus is on recruitment, training, and compensation for Penn’s 11,400 staff employees as well as benefits and quality of work life programs for all faculty and staff. He takes an interest in furthering staff health and wellness, as well as work-life balance initiatives. To promote communication with staff at all levels, he hosts monthly “Chats with Jack”—small-group meet-and-greets during which he welcomes both positive feedback and constructive criticism on Penn’s current practices.

“We in HR don’t want to be enforcers; we want to be enablers who help people define their own careers and lives,” he says. Heuer’s Penn GSE experiences continue to inform his work. For example, he greatly valued the program’s cohort model, which allowed him to form strong relationships with his classmates as part of a group who experienced the entire program together. He wanted leadership development activities at Penn to nurture similar bonds. This inspiration, combined with his dissertation research on talent management in higher education, led to the development of a program for high-potential senior staff.

“The Exec Doc program’s cohort-based design and my dissertation research provided a roadmap for Leadership@Penn, which has been a great success,” says Heuer, who also has a master’s degree in organizational dynamics from the Penn College of Liberal and Professional Studies and whose wife, Lisa J. Heuer, GED’92, is also a Penn GSE graduate.

“I feel fortunate to be able to apply the knowledge I gained at GSE to benefit the University,” he says. “It was an honor to be part of that very first cohort, and it is a privilege to be at Penn now.”

Photo by Candace diCarlo.  
All rights courtesy of The University of Pennsylvania.

Photo by Greg Berson - PhotoAlto





Photo by Scott Spitzer

“The wealth and variety of students and faculty at Penn provide a rich landscape to do the research that we do, and it is interesting to see how we are similar to peer organizations versus what makes us uniquely Penn.”

—Stacey Lopez, GRD '11,  
associate vice president  
for institutional  
research and analysis

## Turning Data into Knowledge



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

Every day, Stacey Lopez, GRD '11, comes to work and uses data to tell stories. As Penn's associate vice president for institutional research and analysis, Lopez heads the office that collects and distills information on anything and everything related to Penn students, faculty, and staff. “We play the role of institutional mirror, reflecting the

University back through quantitative metrics to show both positive trends and opportunities for improvement,” says Lopez, noting that the data that comes out of “IR”—as institutional research is known by higher education insiders—supports planning and decision-making in areas as diverse as admissions, curriculum, staffing, student life, finances, facilities, and alumni relations. The office also coordinates reporting to state and federal entities, accrediting agencies, and other organizations.

Lopez has worked in IR for seventeen years after a “first career” teaching mathematics and statistics at Wichita State University, a background that has served her well since her current field demands an ability to translate numbers into meaningful facts. The recent emergence of “big data” has generated an unprecedented demand for institutional analysts as technology allows organizations to collect and store more information about their business than ever before. Some have called data “the new oil.” While Lopez agrees, she takes the analogy a step further. “Very few people would know what to do with a barrel of raw crude oil—it is necessary to refine that oil before it can be turned into energy,” she explains. “I see IR as playing a role similar to the refinery for the institution—we take raw data and turn it into useful information that can support the decision-making process.”

A few years after arriving at Penn in 2007, Lopez enrolled in GSE's Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program. While her bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics and statistics and her second master's degree in industrial engineering provided her with the technical skills to succeed in IR, they did not offer insight into the higher education landscape. Lopez felt she could better serve the University if she understood its place among its peers.

She reports that one of her most powerful experiences in the program was a study abroad trip to South Africa. The opportunity to compare and contrast another country's educational issues with those back home improved her understanding of the challenges universities face and deepened her appreciation for her position.

“The wealth and variety of students and faculty at Penn provide a rich landscape to do the research that we do, and it is interesting to see how we are similar to peer organizations versus what makes us uniquely Penn,” she says. “At the end of the day, IR is a service organization, and this is a fascinating place to serve.”

## Minding Penn's Business



Christopher Bradie, W'92, G'04, GRD'12, was five years old when he attended his father's college commencement ceremony. Captivated by the graduates marching in academic regalia as their families beamed with pride, he vowed right then that he too would go to college. “Being on this picturesque campus with all of these people on the happiest

day of their lives is my earliest childhood memory. I got indoctrinated in the importance of higher education,” says Bradie, who holds three degrees from Penn: a bachelor's in economics from the Wharton School, a master's in organizational dynamics from the School of Arts and Sciences, and a doctorate from Penn GSE, where he attended the Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program. He began working for the University in 1994 and has served as associate vice president for business services since 2007.

During his undergraduate experience at Wharton, he spent two years as an intern with the Business Services Division. “It was enlightening to see the administrative side of the University. I always felt that if more students knew what went on behind the scenes, they would be even prouder of the institution, observing all the care and energy that goes into running it every day,” he says. Bradie soon returned to Penn after graduation as a buyer for the Penn Bookstore. He gradually climbed to his current role, which involves ensuring twenty different departments and programs meet the needs of the campus community. These individual business units provide a wide range of services spanning retail, housing, dining, hotels, and parking.

“My role allows me to be a bit of an entrepreneur within Penn. I work with corporate partners to make sure the services we provide or that companies offer here match what faculty, staff, and students are looking for,” he explains. “Say Amazon or Uber or a bank wants to have a presence on campus—I work with other campus leaders to determine whether they are offering services that our community wants and then work to develop revenue-generating programs for the University.”

Bradie says his master's curriculum at SAS helped him understand universities' organizational culture, but his GSE program enriched his professional skills even more.

“Even though I had spent almost my entire working career in higher education, I didn't understand how multifaceted it is,” says Bradie, whose dissertation examined how universities make outsourcing decisions. “Working so closely with faculty members and conducting my own original research gave me a new appreciation for the audiences I serve. GSE taught me what it means to truly be a University citizen, and now I understand why and how faculty do what they do and how I can best support them.”

## Keeping Alumni Connected



Penn has approximately three hundred thousand graduates spread around the world. Hoopes Wampler, GRD '13, wants to engage all of them—a goal he acknowledges is a tall order. As associate vice president of alumni relations, Wampler oversees alumni outreach efforts University-wide. “My job is never done, but the great thing is that it's

one-hundred percent about relationships, and every day I advance at least one in some way,” says Wampler, who spent a decade working in undergraduate alumni relations at Harvard. There he earned a master's degree in higher education administration before coming to Penn in 2007. Since then, he has doubled Penn's alumni engagement.

To keep graduates connected, Wampler and his team manage traditional programming like Alumni Weekend (which last year drew a record-setting thirteen thousand attendees), class reunions, and Penn's 130 regional organizations and clubs. They also introduce new services like career development, young alumni gatherings, and alumni education—an area that has taken off in recent years.

“All Penn alumni have one thing in common: they came here for the academic and intellectual experience. Our office works hard to make sure Penn remains their intellectual home for life,” says Wampler. He points to growth in massive open online courses (MOOCs) as a significant development that allows his team to expand alumni access to Penn courses and customized alumni education programs.

Wampler enrolled in Penn GSE's Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program to expand his perspective on higher education. He used his dissertation to explore young alumni engagement, a “hot topic” in the field.

“I rely on the research, analysis, and psychology I developed at GSE to better understand how to connect young alumni to the institution,” he says. “Although they've just had an incredible university experience, often young alumni do not naturally stay connected to their alma mater. GSE taught me how to think through this challenge strategically,” he says.

Becoming a member of the constituency he serves has also benefited Wampler. “Knowing what it's like to be a student here has given me important insight and credibility among our alumni,” he says. He recalls that his cohort of twenty-four classmates “helped each other, laughed and cried together, celebrated and commiserated together, and worked hard together,” noting that the friendships he established at GSE went beyond his peers.

“I also built incredible relationships with the professors, all of whom are successful, important people in the higher education space. It's a privilege to now be able to consider them both colleagues and friends,” he says. ■



# Faces of Philanthropy

by Karen Doss Bowman



Having launched the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign* as part of the University-wide *Power of Penn Campaign*, Penn GSE is gathering support toward a \$75 million fundraising goal to further the School’s mission. *Extraordinary Impact* supports five priorities: building innovative and state-of-the-art learning spaces and technologies; improving students’ learning in a changing world; enhancing democracy by preparing leaders and citizens; advancing and promoting best educational practices locally, nationally, and globally; and creating economic opportunity and hope through education. Here are three stories of campaign gifts that will amplify Penn GSE’s impact in the years ahead:

## Building a Landmark of Twenty-First-Century Learning



Atkin Olshin Schade Architects

Three generous gifts have launched Penn GSE on the path to a state-of-the-art building expansion. Support from Lee Spelman Doty, W’76, and George E. Doty, Jr., W’76; Douglas R. Korn, W’84, and Elizabeth B. Korn; and David N. Roberts, W’84,

and Deborah Roberts, is providing momentum to merge the 3700 Walnut Street building with nearby Stiteler Hall and add a new entrance, a four-story student pavilion, and a two-story adjoining building with classrooms and an innovation lab. Inspired by the work of Penn GSE, the donors praise the plan to bring the majority of the School’s degree programs into a central location with flexible, technologically advanced learning spaces.

“The expansion will revitalize and modernize Penn GSE’s footprint and teaching spaces as the School pursues its ambitious goals for its second century,” says Doug Korn. As chair of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign* and a member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers, he is enthusiastic about the power of education and Penn GSE’s work to advance it. “Education is the building block of any productive society. It improves lives, creates opportunity, and is the basis of a strong democracy,” he says. “I am excited about the effectiveness and passion with which Penn GSE is improving education locally, nationally, and globally.”

Penn GSE’s impact has likewise inspired David Roberts, chair of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers. “Penn GSE has continued to

**“The expansion will revitalize and modernize Penn GSE’s footprint and teaching spaces as the School pursues its ambitious goals for its second century.”**

reach new heights under Dean Pam Grossman’s leadership,” he says. Roberts, whose daughter, Lauren Roberts, C’10, is a teacher, takes a particular interest in how the upgraded facility will enhance the School’s ability to prepare future teachers. “It’s one thing to talk to future teachers about what they can do with physical classroom space, but it’s so much more powerful to be able to say, ‘Here’s what an actual twenty-first-century classroom looks like in terms of the layout, furniture, and technology,’” he says.

Describing her inspiration, Lee Spelman Doty points to Penn GSE’s role in fulfilling the University’s overall mission. “The work of GSE fits in very nicely with Penn’s vision of innovation, impact, and inclusion,” she says. Doty has spent years championing Penn’s mission, currently as vice chair of the University’s *Power of Penn Campaign*, a member of the Penn Board of Trustees, and a member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers, and previously as Penn Alumni president. She views Penn GSE’s planned facility as a “magnet” that will draw prospective students and faculty, as well as partners across the University, to join the School in advancing education. “Penn GSE is doing pioneering work in terms of how you educate educators, how you develop curricula, and how you bring new ideas to the classroom,” she says. “In order to keep innovating and having impact, you need a state-of-the-art space.”

## Advancing Project-Based Learning



Lois Kohn-Claar, C’88, GED’88 and Gary Claar, W’88

technology. She began at Thirteen/WNET as manager of LearningLink, a pioneering online network for K–12 education, and later joined the EDC Center for Children and Technology.

“I began to see the possibilities that emerge when technology is utilized in education,” says Kohn-Claar, a member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers. “Technology can be an amazing tool, but it is only as good as how it is used to enhance learning.”

Because Kohn-Claar appreciates Penn GSE’s commitment to preparing teachers for the next era in the field of education, she and her husband, Gary Claar, W’88, have established a gift to support the newly launched Collaboratory for Teacher Education at Penn GSE. Their support will help to advance the Collaboratory’s work in the design, implementation, and study of experimental approaches to teacher education, with a focus on project-based learning initiatives.

“Education is at a pivotal moment right now, and the old models that were based in an industrial age aren’t relevant anymore,” says Kohn-Claar. “Penn GSE is at the forefront of applying new and innovative models.”

In project-based learning, teachers place students in an active role, guiding them through a process of problem solving and creating. Technology is essential as students conduct research and produce projects that often involve computer programming, 3D printing, and multimedia. Through the new Project-Based Learning Certificate Program, Penn GSE and the Collaboratory are taking the lead in professional development for a new era in education. *See page 4 to learn more about the Collaboratory and page 6 to learn about its work in project-based learning.*

“Nothing is more important than having inspirational and dedicated educators,” says Kohn-Claar, who admires the vision and leadership of Dean Pam Grossman and other Penn GSE administrators and faculty. “It gives me great pride to see Penn GSE’s continued leadership in education.”

**“Education is at a pivotal moment right now, and the old models that were based in an industrial age aren’t relevant anymore.”**

Lois Kohn-Claar, C’88, GED’88, believes technology holds the power to transform education. With an insider’s view of both traditional classrooms and the field of educational technology, she is dedicated to the challenge of re-envisioning learning. After starting her career as a high school history teacher, Kohn-Claar worked for more than a decade in educational

## Expanding Access to Education



Monica Valrani and Navin Valrani, W’93, GED’18

leads eleven companies and was named to the 2018 *Construction Week* Power 100 list. Monica, a certified Montessori teacher, is CEO of Ladybird Nurseries, one of the leading early years education providers in Dubai.

When Al Shirawi embarked on a venture to improve the K–12 educational landscape for children in Dubai, Navin took on his additional role as CEO of Arcadia Education, in which he oversaw the opening of The Arcadia Preparatory School for elementary-age students. That undertaking brought Navin to Penn GSE to continue his own education. While he holds an MBA from London Business School in addition to his undergraduate degree from Wharton, he wanted to study entrepreneurship in the context of education and gain the academic and practical experience that would best prepare him to chart Arcadia’s future. “First and foremost, the faculty at Penn GSE are truly world-class,” says Navin. “And the program provides an excellent toolkit for educational entrepreneurs to take their respective businesses forward and create real impact in the world.”

Navin is now developing a secondary school scheduled to open in December 2019 and a large K–12 school to be launched at a later date. He envisions expanding Arcadia’s reach beyond Dubai by establishing more schools around the world, a vision that he sees as parallel to Penn GSE’s work advancing education locally, nationally, and globally. “As we build out Arcadia’s footprint, what’s most critical is this mission to provide world-class education to those who normally wouldn’t have the opportunity to get one,” he says.

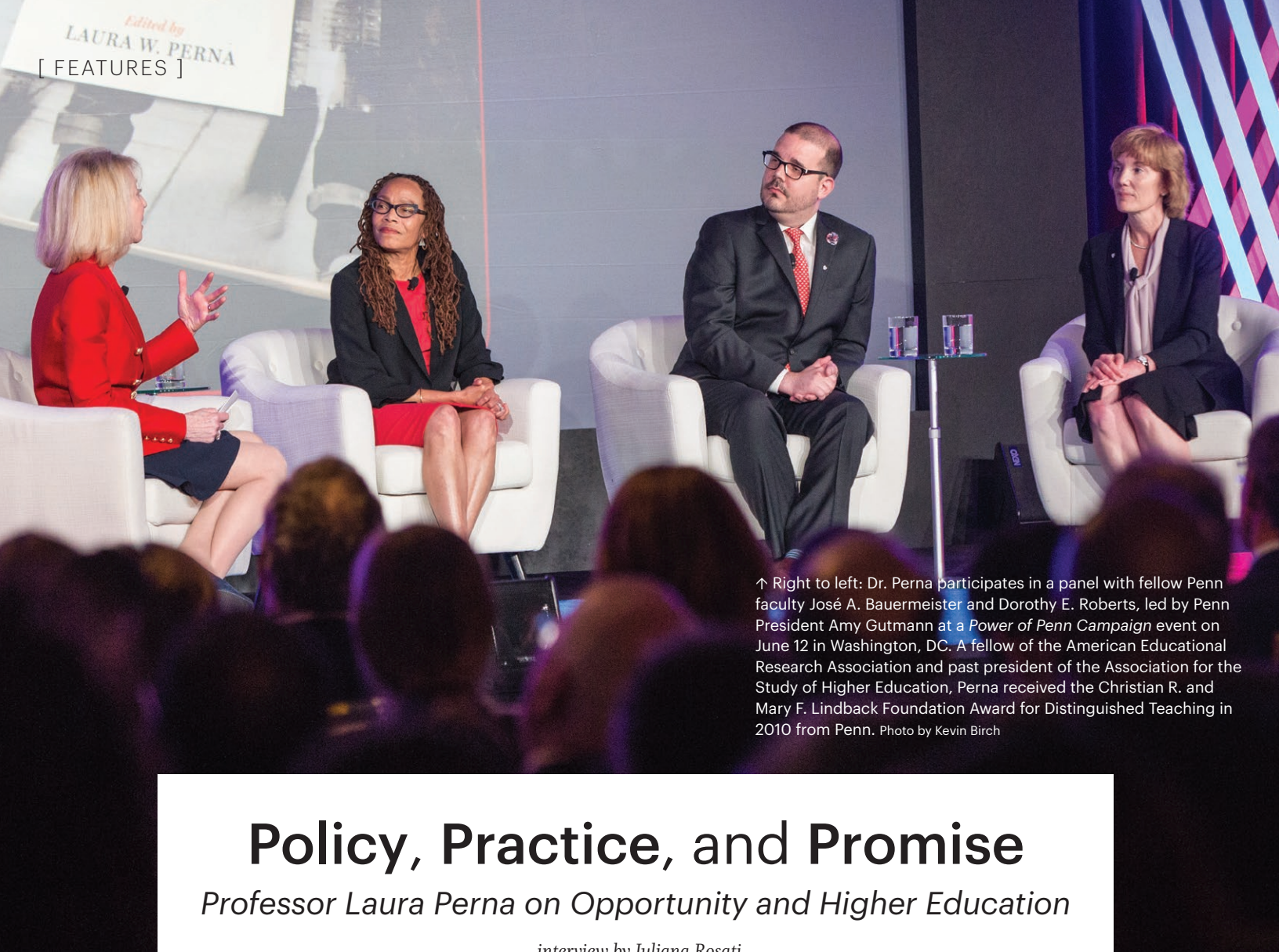
Sharing a desire to expand educational access, he and Monica have chosen philanthropy as another avenue to address the barriers that many students face. At Penn GSE the couple has established the Monica and Navin Valrani Scholarship to support minority women in graduate programs. “We believe we have a responsibility to try and make a difference in the lives of those who don’t have the kind of access to education that we had,” says Navin. ■

Navin Valrani, W’93, GED’18, and his wife, Monica, believe passionately in the power of education.

“We believe that education can solve the majority of the world’s problems,” says Navin, a member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers who graduated this year from the School’s Education Entrepreneurship program. As CEO of engineering services at Al Shirawi Group in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Navin

To learn more about the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact) or contact us at 215.573.6623 or [alumni@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:alumni@gse.upenn.edu).





↑ Right to left: Dr. Perna participates in a panel with fellow Penn faculty José A. Bauermeister and Dorothy E. Roberts, led by Penn President Amy Gutmann at a *Power of Penn Campaign* event on June 12 in Washington, DC. A fellow of the American Educational Research Association and past president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Perna received the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching in 2010 from Penn. Photo by Kevin Birch

## Policy, Practice, and Promise

### Professor Laura Perna on Opportunity and Higher Education

interview by Juliana Rosati



Photo by iStock.com/bet\_noire

With college costs and student debt continuing to rise, concerns about higher education affordability and access have never been more urgent. Penn GSE's Dr. Laura W. Perna, C'88, W'88, James S. Riepe Professor, has dedicated her career to studying how cost and other factors put college within or beyond reach for students, particularly those from underrepresented groups. A national expert, Perna has testified before members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, offering recommendations based on her research. At Penn GSE, she is chair of the Higher Education division and co-founding executive director of Penn AHEAD (Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy). We sat down with Perna to discuss how her latest work is informing the national dialogue on gaps in college access and completion, helping institutions better serve low-income students, and shedding light on the recent rise of community-driven "College Promise" financial aid programs.

**Q:** How would you describe the challenges that your research seeks to address?

**A:** All people should have the opportunity to enroll in and benefit from high-quality higher education. But in the United States—and in many other countries—this is not the case. This inequality has important consequences for individuals and our society. The industries that are growing and the jobs that are in demand require some level of college education. Even in the economic downturn, people who had a college education did better than those who did not. My driving goal is to try to address the large—and by some measures, growing—structural inequality in our educational systems.

**Q:** What are some of the differences that affect whether students attend and graduate from college?

**A:** We know that students must be academically prepared for college-level work, they must have the financial resources required to pay college costs, and they must have the knowledge and support required to navigate our nation's complex educational systems. This means that students from low-income families, students whose parents have not attended college, students from racial and ethnic minoritized groups, and students who attend schools without advanced courses or college counselors are often at a tremendous disadvantage in relation to higher education.

**Q:** How can these factors be addressed?

**A:** Addressing these issues requires changes by the federal government, state governments, colleges and universities, and K–12 schools. To improve understanding of one aspect of the federal government's role, student loans, I held a research conference at Penn in August 2016, with support from the Spencer Foundation and other organizations. We published a collection of papers from the conference, *Understanding Student Debt: Who Borrows, the Consequences of Borrowing, and the Implications for Federal Policy* (edited with Nicholas Hillman, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2017). The Penn Wharton Public Policy Initiative issued a policy brief summarizing key takeaways, and we shared key findings at a meeting for congressional staff on Capitol Hill. Some of my other projects recognize the central role of state policy in closing college attainment gaps. Advancing knowledge of how states can improve academic readiness, college affordability, and college completion is the focus of a book I co-wrote with my colleague Joni Finney, *The Attainment Agenda* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

**"College Promise programs are interesting because they are being developed from the ground level—people are coming together and trying to figure out how they can make college affordable for members of their community."**

**Q:** Several of the current projects you are conducting at Penn AHEAD focus on college affordability. You have been documenting the link between income and college outcomes for four years through your project "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States," a collaboration with the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, funded by Lumina Foundation. What are some of the most significant findings of your 2018 annual *Indicators Report*, and what impact can they have?

**A:** Students from higher-income families are still far likelier to go to college and complete college than those from low-income families. More low-income students are attending college than in years past, but low-income students continue to be concentrated in less selective and for-profit institutions and have lower degree completion rates. Also worrisome is the growth in borrowing, especially among African American students. Recent data show that over 90 percent of graduating black seniors had borrowed, compared with 66 percent of white graduating seniors. We have heard that the data in the annual *Indicators* reports have been helpful to organizations in making the case for work they do to support underserved students. We also hope the reports will bring attention to the many important issues that need to be addressed, and to the need to study them further.

**Q:** You are researching how colleges and universities can better serve low-income students through your project "Institutional Practices for Improving Higher Education Equity," also funded by Lumina Foundation. How would you describe your goals and the work you've done so far?

**A:** Some colleges and universities have been more successful than others at enrolling and graduating low-income students. We want to identify the practices that have made them successful, so that other institutions can learn from these examples. Our preliminary analyses indicate that it is important for institutions to increase the share of educational expenses allocated to instruction and decrease the



Emerging Researchers



Elaine Leigh



Jeremy Wright



Roman Ruiz

the “Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States” project and is now a researcher at the American Institutes for Research. “Laura is an amazing mentor and teacher,” he says. “She transformed me from a practitioner into a researcher. It’s been a wonderful experience.”

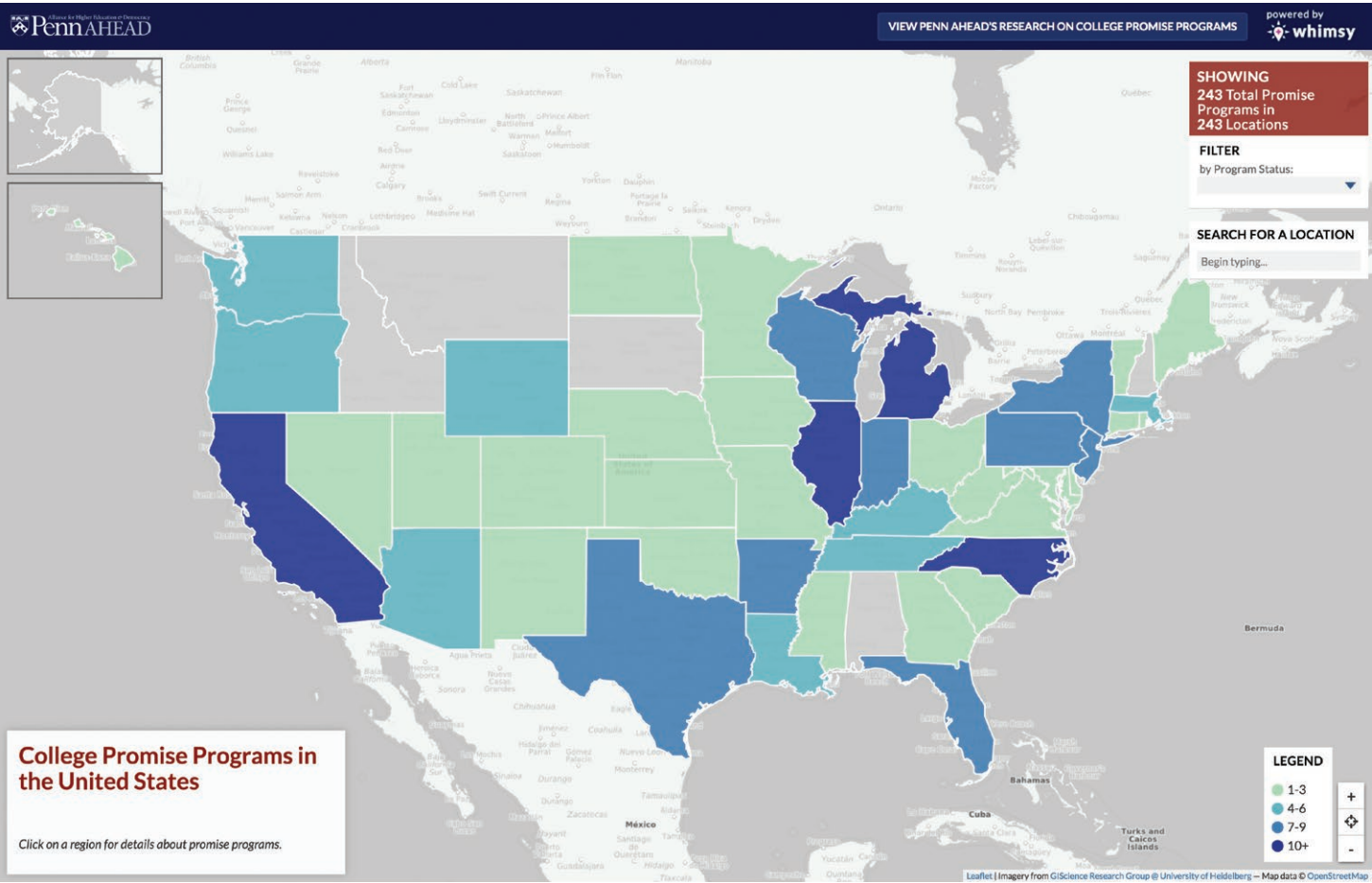
Three Ph.D. students at Penn GSE have participated in Dr. Perna’s current research as they prepare for their own research careers: Elaine Leigh, Jeremy Wright, and Roman Ruiz. All three brought insight from working on the front lines of education as practitioners and express gratitude for the experience of conducting research with Perna. “As a teacher, I saw opportunity gaps among my students, and that’s something that has driven my research interests,” says Leigh, a former teacher and college access program manager, who is contributing to the research on College Promise programs. “I found an alignment of interests with Laura, who is really a leader in this work, and everything you would want in an advisor.” Wright, previously an advisor to students at the University of Chicago, is taking part in “Institutional Practices for Improving Higher Education Equity” and the College Promise research. “Laura pursues topics that address not only educational policy, but also practical implications for students and institutions. I wanted to learn from her perspective, and she gave me the opportunity for hands-on research experience right from the beginning,” he says. Ruiz, a former college counselor and academic advisor, participated in

average net price—the actual cost after aid—for low-income students. Penn GSE doctoral student Jeremy Wright, Penn undergraduate Nathan Jiang, and I are now completing an analysis of how institutions employ the net price calculator, an online tool that most colleges and universities are required to use to communicate information to students and families about college costs and financial aid. The findings that are emerging from this study have important implications for students, counselors, institutions, and policy.

**Q: You are also researching the role of local communities in addressing college costs. In recent years, states and communities across the country have been stepping forward to create College Promise programs, which offer funding for students to attend a postsecondary institution, often a community college. What insight are you aiming to provide?**  
**A:** College Promise programs are interesting because they are being developed from the ground level—people are coming together and trying to figure out how they can make college affordable for members of their community. For researchers, the programs can be difficult to compare and study, because every community has a particular set of circumstances and the programs take many forms. We want to make it easier for research to be done in this area, so that the programs can benefit from findings about what works.

**Q: What have you done so far?**  
**A:** With encouragement from the national, nonpartisan College Promise Campaign initiative and seed funding from Civic Nation, we began our work by defining what a College Promise program is, and trying to understand the differences between these programs and longstanding student aid programs. We define a College Promise program as meeting three criteria: a central goal of increasing higher education attainment, a financial award beyond existing federal and state aid to offset the cost of college, and a “place-based” student eligibility requirement, such as living in a designated city or attending a specific school. We developed a comprehensive searchable database of College Promise programs in the United States, available at [www.ahead-penn.org](http://www.ahead-penn.org). In a 2018 paper published in *Educational Researcher*, Elaine Leigh and I set forth seven categories that we believe provide a useful way of looking at the programs. Now, in partnership with Research for Action and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we are taking a deeper look at a small group of state and local programs.

**Q: What potential do you see in College Promise programs?**  
**A:** College Promise programs could have several benefits. First, many of the programs are looking at how federal, state, and institutional aid come together and how communities can address students’ remaining financial need. By bringing attention to how those different forms of aid align, we might be able to create more affordable options for students. Second, because the programs say that they will cover college tuition and fees for students who meet certain criteria, they potentially provide a transparent message to students. This is important because many students and families have inaccurate understandings of the availability of financial aid due to the complexity of our nation’s financial aid system. Third, the programs may create an opportunity to ensure better transitions when students try to progress from high school to college, and from community college to a four-year institution. These are both points at which students are at risk of discontinuing their education. Since many College Promise



↑ Dr. Perna’s College Promise research has resulted in a comprehensive database and interactive map of programs. She is author of *The Attainment Agenda: State Policy Leadership for Higher Education* (with Joni Finney, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014) and *The State of College Access and Completion: Improving College Success for Students from Underrepresented Groups* (with Anthony Jones, 2013). Her new book, *Taking it to the Streets: The Role of Scholarship in Advocacy and Advocacy in Scholarship* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018) was released this spring.

programs support students at community colleges, the programs could increase attention to the role of community colleges in helping students to move forward.  
These are all potential benefits—but we also need to pay attention to potential limitations and unintended consequences. For instance, most programs do not provide any financial aid to students from low-income families beyond what they are already receiving from Federal Pell Grants and state need-based aid programs. We also need to look at the services and supports that colleges are providing to students who enroll because of College Promise programs.

**Q: Your new book, *Taking it to the Streets: The Role of Scholarship in Advocacy and Advocacy in Scholarship* (2018, Johns Hopkins University Press), is a collection of essays you’ve edited about the extent to which researchers view themselves as advocates for equity, inclusiveness, and social change. What drew you to this topic?**  
**A:** Faculty and students at Penn GSE study education because we want to improve the lives and experiences of others. Especially in this era of “fake news,” I wanted to reflect with other higher education scholars on how we are ensuring that data and research are being used and applied. The essays in this volume show that there are many ways to connect research and policy to advance equity,

inclusiveness, and social change. In another paper just published in the *American Educational Research Journal*, Kata Orosz, GR’16, Daniel Kent, GED’16, and I explain how academic researchers are contributing to congressional legislative hearings, one aspect of federal policymaking.  
**Q: Why is a college education important, and what do you see as the way forward?**  
There are so many benefits that come with higher education. Individuals benefit from higher earnings and better working conditions, longer lives, and better health. Society benefits from having more engaged citizens, a higher tax base, lower reliance on social welfare programs, and lower crime. I believe that higher education is essential to the economic and social well-being of individuals, and to our communities, states, and nation. But our system of higher education is complex and difficult to navigate, and it has too many characteristics that limit access and success for people from underserved groups. Whether through state or national policy, institutional practices, local aid programs, or a combination, we need to recognize where students have come from, provide the support they need, and make the systemic and structural changes that allow all students to enroll and succeed in college. ■





# LEADERS *and* ROLE MODELS

EDUCATORS GROW THROUGH PENN GSE'S  
MID-CAREER DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

by Jen Miller

For teachers and administrators seeking to take on new challenges in education, the best way forward is often through an advanced degree. This can mean uprooting their lives and leaving their students behind in order to garner knowledge that will make them better leaders. Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership offers a different option.

"We serve passionate, talented educators who want to stay in practice while earning their degree, so that they don't have to leave their positions to pursue a traditional program," says Penn GSE Senior Fellow Michael C. Johaneck, director of the program. "We see it as an advantage that they can integrate what they learn into their day job."

A cohort of twenty-five students enters the program each year. Over the course of three years, each cohort comes to campus for an intensive weekend session nearly every month, and for a full week each July. In between sessions, students undertake coursework and participate in online discussions while continuing their full-time jobs. "They learn to think differently about their work and gain the potential to take on new roles that amplify their leadership," says Dr. Johaneck.

Current Mid-Career students Jennifer C. Stimpson and John LePelley have brought new insights from the program to their schools as they develop their leadership skills and strive to be strong role models for their students.

"On a trampoline you jump up and down. I felt like I'd reached a point where I was jumping in my career, but the Mid-Career program would be the launch pad I needed to move forward," says Stimpson, who has been a teacher for nearly twenty years. Once a chemist for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Stimpson realized she had a knack for teaching when she volunteered in a public school in Dallas, Texas. Today she is a science teacher at The Hockaday School, a girls' independent pre-K to 12 school in Dallas. She is also founder of jSTEMp Science, which runs science-themed camps for middle school students, particularly girls of color. Stimpson was named one of three winners of O magazine's White House Leadership Project and one of ten Hidden Figures of Dallas: Top Women of Color in STEM by the National Society of Black Engineers.

Now in her second year of the Mid-Career program, Stimpson considers it a defining moment in her career. "I have learned that effective leaders help others shift the way they see themselves. They



Jennifer C. Stimpson



John LePelley

**"As someone who grew up in a low-income household, and as a first-generation college graduate, I hope to inspire students from similar backgrounds."**

important to me to bring what I've learned from my classmates back to my school community," he says.

He also considers his classmates an extended family. "If we're going through a challenge in our workplace, we call each other for advice on how to handle the situation," he says, "and we're in touch regularly, not only to share advice about our assignments, but also to check in on each other. If we know someone is sick, we send them get-well gifts, and we text each other on birthdays. We know when we're in a classmate's city, and we visit them while traveling."

That sense of community continues after students graduate, according to Johaneck. "We aren't just conducting a three-year program—we're building a long-term network of alumni who share a commitment to educational leadership and to one another," he says. ■

motivate students, faculty, and staff to go beyond what is asked. I apply this understanding in my professional life," she says. She hopes to serve as a positive role model for her students and encourage them to see themselves as capable individuals and future scientists. "I see it as my responsibility to help more girls, particularly girls of color and African American girls, face the field of science with confidence and preparedness," says Stimpson, who also hopes to write books about the STEM experience for girls of color.

John LePelley, a member of the same Mid-Career cohort as Stimpson, was intrigued by the prospect of a rigorous doctoral program that didn't force him to leave his full-time position. LePelley is head of school at Cleveland School of the Arts, an urban public school in Ohio where students can focus their studies on music, dance, theater, writing, or the visual arts while preparing for college. An artist with an MBA, LePelley has spent his career in urban education working with low-income students, first as a math teacher and later as an administrator. Prior to joining Cleveland School of the Arts, he was principal of another school in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Like Stimpson, he hopes to set an example for students.

"As someone who grew up in a low-income household, and as a first-generation college graduate, I hope to inspire students from similar backgrounds," he says. "It is also important to me that as an openly gay urban public school leader, I am serving as a role model for LGBTQ kids."

Interested in a future position that would focus on coaching and mentoring school leaders, LePelley points to his classmates in the Mid-Career program as a significant source of learning. "We share the unique perspectives and skills that we bring to the table when working with kids to solve school challenges. It's been



# ENGAGING ALUMNI

Penn GSE Boosts Opportunities for Graduates

by Jane L. Lindahl, GED'18

Penn GSE launched *Extraordinary Impact: The Campaign for Penn GSE* in April as part of the University-wide *Power of Penn Campaign*. In addition to a \$75 million fundraising goal to advance the School's core strengths, *Extraordinary Impact* supports several priorities meant to **enrich**, **enhance**, and **expand** your relationship with the School as a Penn GSE graduate:



## ENRICH your experience

During the past year, Penn GSE's Alumni Directory Project invited alumni to provide updated information about their locations, job titles, and career fields. The process resulted in a refreshed picture of our graduates, which will allow Penn GSE to make informed decisions when developing new programs for lifelong learning, sharing resources to advance your professional journey, and connecting you with events and graduates in your location. Our new alumni volunteer opportunity, the Alumni Ambassadors Program, provides a platform to share your unique knowledge and expertise with the next generation of educators through activities that best fit your interests and schedule. You can learn about these offerings and more by visiting [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events) and [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved).

Jane Lindahl is associate director of development and alumni relations at Penn GSE. Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni) or contact us directly at [alumni@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:alumni@gse.upenn.edu) to learn how to enhance your alumni journey.



## ENHANCE your engagement

Through the recent Penn GSE Alumni Survey, we learned that 78 percent of respondents are interested in online engagement. Approximately 60 percent of Penn GSE graduates live fifty miles or more from campus, and over 10 percent live abroad, making a user-friendly virtual presence essential for connecting our community. To better meet this need, Penn GSE enhanced the Alumni and Support sections of the School's website, launching new pages in April. At [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni) and [www.gse.upenn.edu/support](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support) you will find resources for lifelong learning, opportunities for professional development, alumni stories, and more. We have also begun bringing on-campus programming to you by sharing videos on our pages. These include a Live Career Tools series with Penn Alumni Education featuring Dr. Annie McKee and her latest book, *How to Be Happy at Work*, and the Voices in Education program from the 2018 Celebration of Educators (see page 25).



## EXPAND your opportunities

Penn GSE graduates are part of a rich and dynamic community of more than three hundred thousand Penn alumni world-wide. The School today offers more than thirty degree programs, annually producing future leaders who will have an impact across the field of education and beyond. Being part of our community means engaging with this powerful network and having ongoing access to resources that enable your personal and professional growth. Penn GSE is committed to providing you with relevant resources for your alumni journey and connecting you with those offered by the University, such as Penn to You evenings of intellectual and social engagement, the *Power of Penn Campaign* series with President Amy Gutmann, and Penn Spectrum conversations on issues of cultural identity. Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources) and [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events) for comprehensive and growing lists of alumni resources, benefits, and opportunities. ■

Image credits: Steven Minicola (top), Ryan Collerd (left), Brooke Slezak Photography (right)

## EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  PENN GSE

### 2018 Education Alumni AWARDEES

Penn GSE  
Educator of the Year  
Award

**Christian T. Edge,**  
G'12, GED'13

Helen C. Bailey Award  
**Abigail Gray,**  
GR'14

William B. Castetter  
Alumni Award of Merit  
**Julie D. Filizetti,**  
GRD'03

Ethel and Allen "Buddy" Carruth  
Sustained Leadership  
in Education Award  
**Karen P. Boback,**  
GR'85

The Penn GSE  
Recent Alumni/Early Career  
Award of Merit  
**Eduardo A. Alleyne,**  
GRD'16

**Nina De Peña Hoe,**  
GED'10, GR'14

Find our 2019 nomination form at  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/  
get-involved/awards-nominations](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved/awards-nominations)

Save the Date:  
Alumni Weekend  
May 17-20, 2019

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/  
alumni/events](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events)  
to find upcoming  
alumni events on campus  
and in your region.



↑ Left to right: Joel Greenblatt, Dean Pam Grossman, and Donald E. Graham welcome Penn GSE alumni and friends with the Voices in Education program.

## CELEBRATING EDUCATORS

Alumni and friends gathered on May 12, 2018, at The Inn at Penn for Penn GSE's annual Celebration of Educators during Penn's Alumni Weekend. The event featured Voices in Education—a conversation with Donald E. Graham and Joel Greenblatt, W'79, WG'80—and an Alumni Celebration Reception recognizing the 2018 Education Alumni Awardees and other honorees. The event represented the on-campus launch of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*.

Dean Pam Grossman led the conversation between Graham and Greenblatt, addressing some of the challenges facing education today. Graham, chair of the board of Graham Holdings Company (previously The Washington

Post Company), is co-founder of TheDream.US. Greenblatt, a Wharton graduate, former University trustee, and member of the Penn Medicine Board and the Penn GSE Board of Overseers, is managing partner of Gotham Capital and co-founder of Success Academy Charter Schools in New York City.

"We were delighted to hear from these two passionate advocates for educational opportunity," says Grossman. "As a leading school of education, we want to provide occasions for our students and graduates to hear firsthand from leaders and changemakers from across the field and to create conversations that span the contexts of K-12 and higher education." ■



↑ Dean Pam Grossman congratulates the 2018 Education Alumni Awardees. Left to right: Eduardo A. Alleyne, GRD'16; Dean Grossman; Julie D. Filizetti, GRD'03; Karen P. Boback, GR'85; Abigail Gray, GR'14; Nina De Peña Hoe, GED'10, GR'14; Christian T. Edge, G'12, GED'13. Photos by Ginger Fox Photography



# Alumni Notes

## About Penn Affiliations

At Penn, all alumni have an affiliation, or series of letters and numbers following their name to indicate the degree, school, and year of graduation. A master’s degree from GSE is represented as GED and an education doctorate as GRD. A philosophy doctorate from any school at Penn is represented as GR. An undergraduate degree offered by the School of Education until 1961 is represented as ED. The two numbers following the letters represent the year in which that degree was completed.

## 1950s

**Ruth Silverman, ED’57,** volunteers at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Philharmonic, as well as the Lenox Hill Hospital Auxiliary, where she co-chairs a program introducing high school students to the medical field.

## 1960s

**Jay Gertzman, ED’61, GR’72,** is the author of *Pulp, According to David Goodis* (Down and Out Books, 2018).

**Moira Walker, GED’68,** is retired and serving on the boards of two organizations, WINGS (a women’s shelter) and The Alberta Lung Association. She is also a medical actress.

## 1970s

**Susan Marcus, CW’71, GED’73,** moved to Silicon Valley after retiring from the New York City Department of Education Division of Nonpublic Schools. She now lives in New Jersey and plans to move to Israel to be with her son.

**Ryda Rose, CW’50, GRD’71,** former Penn GSE faculty member and constant student advocate, celebrated her ninetieth birthday with friends, former students and colleagues, and family in August. A lifelong lover of learning, she plans to continue exploring all that life has to offer.

**Gwendolyn Samuels, C’77, GED’79,** retired to New Mexico. She works part-time providing language services in the legal field and creates art in her spare time.

## 1980s

**Robert Atkinson, GR’85,** is a 2017 Nautilus Book Award winner for his ninth book, *The Story of Our Time: From Duality to Interconnectedness to Oneness* (Sacred Stories Publishing, 2017). He is a member of Evolutionary Leaders.

**Terence Blackwell, GED’80,** is CEO of Chimes, an organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities, autism, and behavioral health issues across the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and in Tel Aviv, Israel.

**Anna Dapice, NU’74, GR’80,** has expanded her publications beyond an academic audience, striving to reach the general public and her Native American community through sixteen articles on educational issues in the *Oklahoma Observer*.

**Kathleen Egan, GR’86,** and **William (Bill) Pollard, GR’85,** visited ten countries through Semester at Sea in the fall of 2017. Kathleen has completed a certificate in spiritual direction and Bill enjoys volunteering.

**Marc Epstein, C’84, GED’89,** is in his ninth year at the Pennington School in Pennington, NJ. He teaches AP U.S. Government, World History, and electives and runs the Model U.N. program.

**Larry Lake, GED’89,** recently retired after thirty-one years as director of writing at Messiah College. He makes periodic trips to Indonesia as a consultant for literacy programs.

**Maryanne McGuckin-Guinan, GED’79, GRD’81,** is a consultant for patient education. She wrote *The Patient Survival Guide: 8 Simple Solutions to Prevent Hospital- and Healthcare-Associated Infections* (Demos Health, 2012) and has spoken at global health summits in Budapest and Bonn.

**Marcia L. Renzetti, C’84, GED’84,** spent seventeen years in pharmaceutical research before returning to public education. She has taught Chemistry and AP Chemistry for the past sixteen years.

**Shelley B. Wepner, GED’73, GRD’80,** and colleagues received the American Association of University Administrators 2018 Neuner Award for their article about education deans in the 2017 issue of *The Journal of Higher Education Management*. She is dean and professor at Manhattanville College.

**Ana Zentella, GR’81,** received the 2016 Award for Public Outreach and Community Service from the Society for Linguistic Anthropology. She recently contributed to *Spanish-English Codeswitching in the Caribbean and the U.S.* (John Benjamins, 2016) and the *International Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest*.

## 1990s

**Barbara Caruso, GR’93,** an educational consultant, has developed “A Survivor of Suicide,” an experiential seminar addressing the often-sensitive topic of suicide. She hopes to collaborate with fellow Penn researchers and educators to further her educational model.

**Katharine Ciarrocca, D’96, GD’98, GED’98,** began a new position in July as director of interprofessional education and practice at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry.

**Brooke Stengel Fitzgerald, GED’94,** has spent five years expanding her independent college counseling practice, YourCollegeApps.com, working with students locally and connecting with them virtually across the country and around the world.

**Linda McKenna Gulyn, GED’86, GR’91,** published a paper on social perceptions of disability, “Exploring Perceptions of Blame for Autism Spectrum Disorders” (*Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, October 2018, Volume 30, Issue 5), written with Catherine Diaz-Asper.

**Allison Koenig Mieloch, GED’97,** is applying her cross-cultural communication skills to global information technology as senior director at Sungard Availability Services. She credits her Penn GSE education for her perspective on optimizing global teamwork.

**Linda Thatcher Raichle, GR’92,** was named a fellow and distinguished member of the Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions in recognition of her longstanding commitment to medical education. She recently retired from the pharmaceutical industry.

**Margaret Roth, CW’68, GED’91,** is entering her twenty-seventh year at Council for Relationships, where she is senior staff marriage and family therapist. She enjoys traveling with her husband and would like to reconnect with Penn GSE alumni.

**Akiko Shirabe, GED’98,** has been a lecturer in Japanese at Stockholm University in Sweden since 2017. She is responsible for all levels of undergraduate language courses.

**Carol Smolenski, C’90, GED’91,** is preparing for a third career, studying clinical mental health counseling with a music therapy specialization in a master’s program at Lesley University.

**Michael Townsley, GR’94,** wrote the biography *Steve Hannagan: Prince of the Press Agents and Titan of Modern Public Relations* (Dog Ear Publishing, 2018).

**Al Vernacchio, GED’93,** was featured in the June issue of *Philadelphia Magazine* regarding his approach to human sexuality education. He is sexuality education coordinator at Friends’ Central School in Wynnewood, PA.

## 2000s

**A. Brooks Bowden, GED’07,** coauthored the textbook *Economic Evaluation of Education: Cost-Effectiveness and Benefit-Cost Analysis*, Third Edition (SAGE Publications, 2017).

**Ryan Brown, GED’02,** teaches at W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, VA, where he started a club to support the Washington Capitals ice hockey team. Goalie Braden Holtby visited the school and wrote a sonnet about winning the Stanley Cup.

**Angela Cleveland, GED’01,** was promoted to program director of Counselors for Computing at the National Center for Women & Information Technology. The program provides resources to help students explore computer science careers.

**Kevin Collins, GED’04,** earned his Ph.D. in education policy from Claremont Graduate University. His dissertation examines the relationship between first-amendment rights and speech code policies at 110 public colleges and universities.

**Anthony Conrad, G’95, GR’05,** was appointed co-chair of the Penn Alumni Interview Program in Bucks County, PA. He has completed a series of postgraduate seminars in the United Kingdom at Kellogg College, Oxford University.

**John Craig, GRD’08,** led the presentation “Growth Mindset and Metacognition: Keys to Promoting Student Autonomy During the Advising Relationship” at the 2018 NACADA International Conference on academic advising. He is director of the academic development program at West Chester University.

**Jennifer Crewalk, GED’08,** has been working with first-generation and undocumented college students for over eight years in the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education at George Mason University.

**Rahshene Davis, GED’03,** is assistant superintendent in The School District of Philadelphia. She remembers her Penn GSE experience fondly and values being connected to a wonderful network of educators.

**Jennifer Glynn, GED’97, GR’03,** directs all research and evaluation activities for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. Her most recent report, “Opening Doors,” highlights best practices for increasing socioeconomic diversity among students at selective colleges and universities.

**Daniel Hickey, GRD’06,** is head of school at Upland Country Day School in Kennett Square, PA. Upland is an independent school serving students from preschool through grade nine.

**Stefani Hite, GED’95, GRD’05,** was named to present a pre-conference session, “Building Collective Efficacy by Opening Classroom Doors,” at the 2018 International Baccalaureate Global Conference in Vienna, Austria.

**Nicolle Hutchinson, GED’09,** is CEO of Gillingham Charter School, which has received its first charter renewal. She is a newly elected member of the Leadership Council of the Pennsylvania Coalition for Public Charter Schools.

**Cristina Keeton, GED’06,** has begun a new career in public education, working as a middle school Spanish teacher for Loudoun County Public Schools in Virginia.

**William P. Kiehl, GRD’07,** was appointed to the board of trustees of Wilson College in Chambersburg, PA.

**John F. Kucia, GRD’04,** received the Paul L. O’Connor Leadership Award from Xavier University, where he is administrative vice president. His scholarship on leadership is being used to establish the John F. Kucia Leadership Academy at Xavier.

**Megan Penrice, GED’04,** looks forward to teaching English-language learners and serving as dean of students at the Colonial School District in Plymouth Meeting, PA.



# Find *The Penn GSE Magazine* Online

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources/gse-magazine](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources/gse-magazine) to find our issue archive featuring the magazine in flipbook and PDF form.

**Bill Rago, GED’04**, leads the middle school English Language Literacy Department at Korea International School Jeju in South Korea. He has lived in Asia since 2003, training teachers and teaching English.

**Julie Rotoloni, GED’08**, continues to enjoy teaching the third grade at Twin Valley Elementary Center in Elverson, PA, while raising her three children and occasionally taking graduate courses.

**Tamara Rozhon, GRD’08**, is managing director of PointC Consulting, a higher education consulting firm focused on assisting at-risk institutions in regard to key strategic issues such as accreditation, mergers and acquisitions, program strategy, and talent management.

**Anthony Sgro, GRD’06**, was appointed head of school at Asheville School in Asheville, NC, effective July 1, 2019. He will be the first Asheville alumnus to lead the school and was previously head of Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

**Kevin Siegel, GED’02**, is a middle-school counselor in the Penn-Delco School District in Aston, PA. His department received the Recognized ASCA Model Program designation from the American School Counselor Association this year.

**Tian Song, GED’09**, completed her seventh year at CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange. As director for the Dominican Republic, she oversees all programs in the country and teaches intercultural communication and leadership.

**Manami Suzuki, GED’01**, is conducting research and writing an article about communication within multinational corporations, working with colleagues at Hosei University in Japan.

**Steve Szilagyi, GED’04**, is in his sixteenth year as associate headmaster for institutional advancement at The Kiski School in Saltsburg, PA. Kiski recently completed a successful \$35 million capital campaign focused on renovations, academic programs, and scholarship support.

**Jordan Tegtmeyer, GED’08**, received the Donald Griffin ’23 Management Award from Princeton University’s Office of Human Resources. The award recognizes administrators’ potential for leadership and continuing contribution to the university.

**Dena Haritos Tsamitis, GRD’09**, was named a 2018 Woman in IT Security Power Player by *SC Magazine*. She has led Carnegie Mellon University’s Information Networking Institute for fifteen years, developing the next generation of professionals in information networking, security, and mobility.

**Ruth Shoemaker Wood, GR’06**, was promoted to partner at Storbeck Pimentel & Associates, where she leads searches for senior-level administrators at colleges and universities across the country.

## 2010s

**Alexander De Arana, GED’17**, received the 2017 Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies Student Teacher of the Year Award for his participation in an exchange between Philadelphia’s Kensington Health Sciences Academy and Montgomery County’s Methacton High School.

**Joi Baker, GED’15**, was promoted to director of college transition and success at the SEED Foundation. She manages college and career programming across the organization’s network of public, college-preparatory boarding schools.

**Denny Barr, GRD’18**, has taught his first course at Western Illinois University, where he is assistant professor of educational leadership. He was accepted to present at the 2018 National Rural Education Association Annual Conference.

**Sarah Beraki, GED’15**, is a college support manager with KIPP Through College. She works with students from eighty different colleges nationwide to foster their persistence and success through college and beyond.

**Melinda Bihn, GRD’14**, was awarded a fellowship to the 2019 Heads of Schools Program at the Klingenstein Center of Teachers College, Columbia University. She is head of the French American International School in San Francisco, CA.

**Joseph L. Boselovic, GED’12**, entered Johns Hopkins University as a doctoral student of sociology in August.

**Katrina Burns, G’11, GED’13**, is beginning her fourth year as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Her research focuses on occupational safety in academic research laboratories.

**Alicia Canton, GRD’11**, served the student affairs organization NASPA for four years as director for Mexico and board member of the Latin America and Caribbean Region. She is dean of student affairs at Universidad de Monterrey in Mexico.

**Nathan Castillo, GR’17**, was hired as one of three new faculty members to join the Technology Innovations in Educational Research and Design initiative at the University of Illinois College of Education.

**Marc Cutillo, GED’14**, received a Teacher as Hero Award from the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia for his work with ESL students and outreach to Latino and immigrant families. He teaches at William Tennent High School in Warminster, PA.

**Darcy (Schneider) DiGiacomo, GED’16**, was named to *Main Line Today’s* 2018 list of Top Teachers Around the Main Line and Western Suburbs. She is an eighth-grade teacher at Radnor Township School District in Wayne, PA.

**Lauren Drago, GED’11**, is owner and private practice counselor at a specialized women-centered therapy practice that offers individualized counseling services in Old Saybrook, CT, and virtual services at a distance.

**Kelly Dun, GED’17**, became founding assistant head for external affairs at The Newgrange School of Princeton Inc. The school provides educational environments and resources for students with learning differences.

**Dexter Evans, GED’18**, is special assistant to President Michael Sorrell, GRD’15, at Paul Quinn College in Dallas, TX. The historically Black college has expanded its urban work college model to a site in Plano, TX.

**Rachel Fester, GR’10**, joined Baruch College at the City University of New York in August 2017 as assistant provost for assessment, accreditation, and institutional effectiveness. Previously, she was an adjunct professor of higher education at Baruch.

**Kimberly Field-Marvin, GRD’16**, became headmistress of Louise S. McGehee School, a girls’ preK–12 independent school in New Orleans, LA, in July. She looks forward to encouraging young women to lead lives of consequence.

**Justin Gelzhiser, GED’12**, completed his Ph.D. studies in social science and comparative education at the University of California Los Angeles Graduate School of Education, examining gun violence in American schools. He will be a lecturer for UCLA in Nanjing, China, this year.

**Isabella Giorno, GED’13**, is dean of students at Chicago Bulls College Prep, a charter school in Chicago, IL. She previously completed a certification in educational leadership and worked as a reading and academic specialist.

**Sterling Grimes, GED’13**, recently transitioned to the nonprofit field after eight years in the classroom. He runs programs for The Fellowship, an organization dedicated to the recruitment and retention of Black male educators.

**Shivani Grover, GED’13**, has been named the first director of enrichment programs at University Village, University of California, Berkeley. She is tasked with developing innovative K–12 programming while mentoring university student leaders.

**Colin Hennessy, GRD’16**, became associate dean of alumni relations and development at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. Previously, he led The Penn Fund of the University of Pennsylvania for nine years.

**David Hill, C’79, GED’14**, is a lecturer at Chinese Culture University’s Language Center in Taiwan. He works alongside Penn GSE alumna **Tracy Hsueh, GED’11**.

**Vanessa Irvin, GRD’12**, was awarded a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to establish a public librarian professional development program in the Hawai’i State Public Library System.

**Paul Kakupa, GED’16**, is a Ph.D. student at Northeast Normal University in China, where he is studying international and comparative education.

**Candace Kenyatta, GED’11**, opened Capstone Academia in 2017 with Everett Kenyatta. The organization is situated to support the growth and development of schools, nonprofits, and corporate environments through research and data analysis.

**Danielle Levine, GED’16**, is senior marketing manager at TinyTap, an educational app that provides a library of educational games made by teachers.

**Qianjun “Kimi” Lin, GED’18**, is progress manager at Ingenious Prep. She is happy to do work she is passionate about and thinks fondly of her Penn GSE experience.

**Holly Link, GR’16**, is director of educational programming and research at the Centro de Cultura, Trabajo, Arte y Educación in Norristown, PA, where she is developing a participatory research center to promote social transformation and inform public policy.

**Christopher Miller, GED’12**, started a new position as director of college counseling at Sandy Spring Friends School in Maryland. He serves on national advisory boards for several universities.

**Samantha Neugebauer, GED’11**, presented with two colleagues at the European First Year Experience Conference in Utrecht, The Netherlands, in 2018. They discussed their work building an academic enrichment program with an emphasis on experiential learning.

**Jessica Pavelka, GED’14**, is a licensed psychotherapist with a private practice in Philadelphia. She specializes in anxiety and mood-related disorders, cognitive behavioral therapy, and mindfulness interventions.

**Alison Priebe, GED’14**, is program development specialist for special programs at Temple University’s Intensive English Language Program.

**Jan Pullen, GRD’13**, is head of school at Saint Stephen’s Episcopal school in Bradenton, FL. The school was named host site of the 2020 International Water is Life Conference, which will convene high school students from over thirty countries to address water security and sustainability issues.

**Ian Riccaboni, GED’10**, celebrated his one-year anniversary as lead announcer and television host for Ring of Honor Wrestling, a program viewed by over one million people each week.

**Samuel Rosenberg, GED’18**, returned to his home state of Illinois after graduating from Penn GSE’s Higher Education program. He works in residential life as area director at Illinois Wesleyan University, his alma mater.

**Alanna Shanahan, C’96, GED’99, GRD’15**, celebrated her second anniversary as director of athletics and recreation at Johns Hopkins University in July.

**Jordan Solomon, GED’11**, was appointed in August by The School District of Philadelphia as a consulting teacher, a position to help new and developing educators improve their practices.



**Michelle Spina, GED’14, GED’15**, was appointed director of inter-college advising at Drexel University. Previously, she worked at Drexel in the Steinbright Career Development Center.

**Meng Tao, GED’12**, is a Chinese instructor at the Western Academy of Beijing in China. She is exploring how to apply her Penn GSE education to the curriculum to achieve a true learner-centered experience.

**William Thayer, GED’15**, will be working at the Antilles School in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, this year, teaching upper school math and taking on math department chair responsibilities.

**Yunning Wang, GED’16**, is a senior operation specialist for the Alibaba Group. Her program trains e-commerce profes-

sionals and connects them to Chinese companies. She hopes to form a system for school-corporation collaborative education.

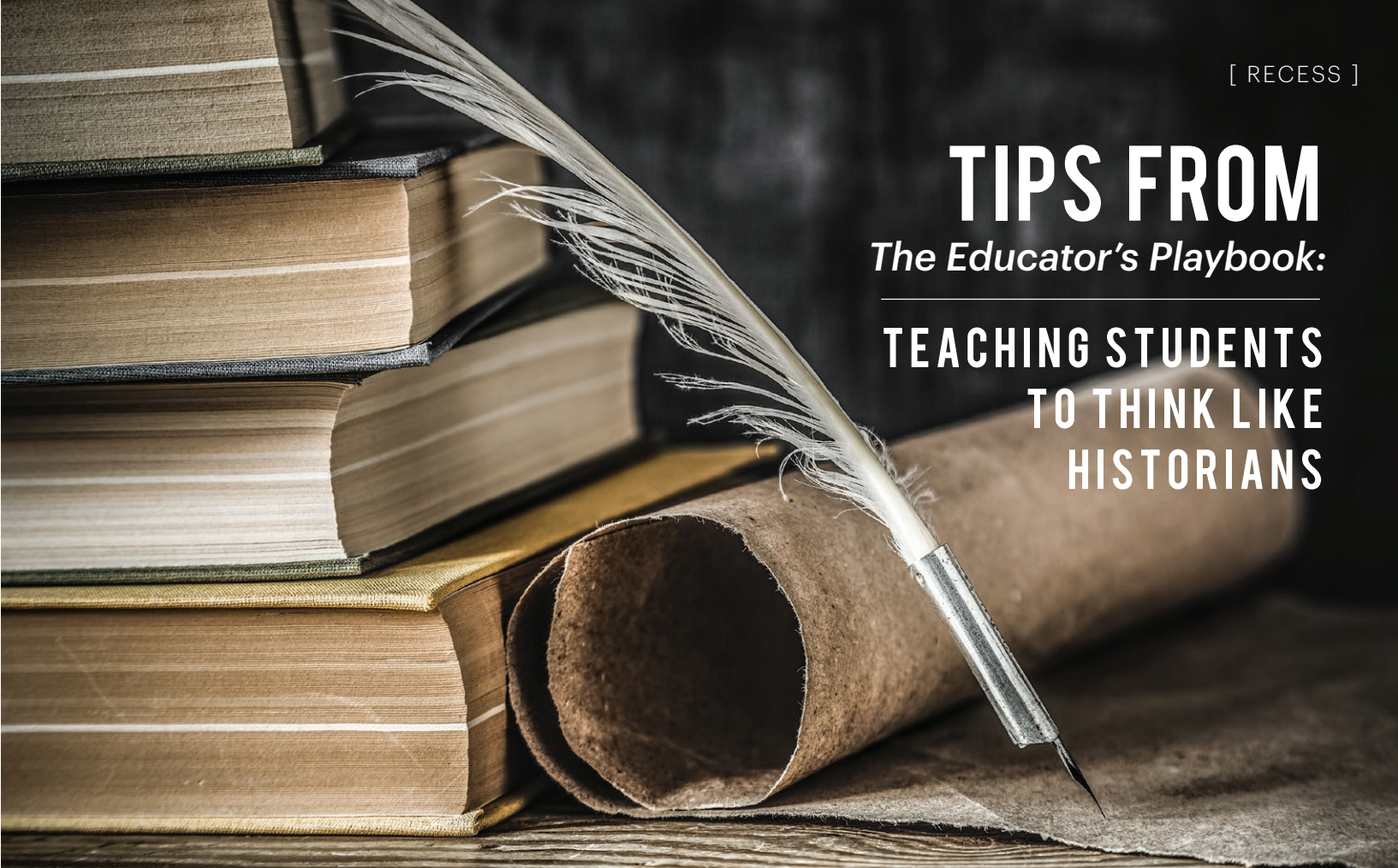
**Fan “Judy” Yang, GED’18**, continued developing her teaching skills through the Princeton-in-Beijing program and has accepted a position as a Chinese-second-language teacher at Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in Suzhou City, China.

**Cong Zhang, GED’11, GED’12**, completed her postdoctoral training in clinical neuropsychology at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School. She will continue to work at the hospital as a licensed psychologist and clinical fellow.

*Submissions have been edited due to space constraints and magazine style guidelines.*

# Share Your News

Fill out our Alumni Notes form at [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved/submit-alumni-notes](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved/submit-alumni-notes) to tell us your updates.



# TIPS FROM The Educator’s Playbook: TEACHING STUDENTS TO THINK LIKE HISTORIANS

Photo by iStock.com/Fotoduetts

# CREATING A LEGACY IN EDUCATION



“As a former social worker, I came to Penn GSE to research how education policy can help at-risk children in their early years and how government can use data to make better decisions on behalf of vulnerable populations. The Castetter Fellowship affirms for me that this work is valued. It also helps me support my family while trying to serve the families of Philadelphia.”

— *Kristen Coe, Ph.D. student in education policy*  
*Recipient of the William B. and Roberta B. Castetter Fellowship*

A vital part of Penn GSE, Dr. William B. Castetter, GR’48, taught at the School for nearly forty years and served twice as acting dean. His devotion to education continues today, supporting students like Kristen due to a bequest made years ago. The William B. Castetter Circle, established in his honor, recognizes individuals who have remembered the School in their estate plans.



[www.gse.upenn.edu/support/ways-to-give/planned-giving](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/ways-to-give/planned-giving)

To learn more about how you can leave a legacy in education, please contact:  
Robert Vosburgh, JD, Director of Gift Planning | 215.898.6171 | [vosburgh@upenn.edu](mailto:vosburgh@upenn.edu)

Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

History class should be a space where students learn to think and reason, not just memorize. The goal should be for students to answer not only “What happened?” but “How do you know?” and “Why do you believe your interpretation is valid?” Such questions align with the Common Core State Standards, which specify that college-ready students can identify an author’s perspective, develop claims or assertions about the text, and cite evidence to support their analyses.

Penn GSE Assistant Professor Abby Reisman helped develop the award-winning Reading Like a Historian curriculum, which engages students in historical inquiry. Here are her tips:



Assistant Professor  
Abby Reisman

## Use texts as evidence.

Few students recognize that every historical narrative is also an argument or interpretation by its author. Sifting through multiple texts that offer different perspectives on an event is neither natural nor automatic, but by doing so, students can learn to weigh and evaluate competing claims about the event, consider the author’s motive and purpose, and draw inferences about the broader social and political context. These are especially important skills in a world where information, both true and bogus, is a mouse click away.

## Develop historical reading skills.

Train students in the four key strategies historians use to analyze documents: sourcing (establishing the circumstances of a document’s creation), corroboration (comparing details across multiple sources), close reading (analyzing arguments and language), and contextualization (understanding how a document was shaped by the time and place in which it was produced). With these skills, students can read, evaluate, and interpret historical documents to determine what happened in the past.

## Demonstrate through modeling.

Before analyzing a historical document, students greatly benefit from seeing their teacher think aloud while reading such a text. A teacher should work through the text, evaluating the author’s reliability and raising broader questions about the event in question. Eventually, students will be ready to try it on their own and in small groups.

(continued on next page) →





Photo by Greg Benson Photography

## Build a document-based lesson.

- Lesson plans in the Reading Like a Historian curriculum generally include four elements:
- Introduce students to background information so they are familiar with the period, events, and issues under investigation.
  - Provide a central historical question that focuses students’ attention. The best questions can be answered from evidence in the document, but are open to multiple interpretations. This transforms the act of reading into a process of creative inquiry.
  - Have students read multiple documents in different genres (such as a historical diary entry and a contemporary news account) to encounter different perspectives on or interpretations of the central historical question.
  - Have students respond to the central historical question in writing, a classroom discussion, or both. Make sure students formulate a historical claim or argument and support it with evidence from the text.

## Want more advice for educators?

These tips are adapted from *The Educator’s Playbook*, a monthly Penn GSE newsletter that distills faculty research into useful advice for K–12 educators.

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe) to sign up.

## Engage in whole-class discussion.

Text-based discussions allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject and internalize higher-level thinking and reasoning. In effective text-based discussions, students articulate their shifting claims, reexamine the available evidence, and interrogate their classmates’ reasoning.



Photo by iStock.com/Rawpixel



COMMENCEMENT  
2018

Penn GSE held its 104th Commencement Ceremony on May 12 at the Palestra. Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and civil rights leader, delivered the keynote address. Penn GSE conferred 637 degrees during 2017-2018.



Photos by Krista Patton Photography





3700 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6216

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 2563  
Philadelphia, PA



“Being a graduate of Penn GSE has always been a point of pride to me. The unique experiences I had while a student at GSE helped shape my personal teaching style. My former students frequently approach me to recall lessons I taught, sometimes thirty years later. Donating to the Penn GSE Annual Fund is my small way of thanking GSE for my career in education and giving other students the same opportunities that I had.”

—Walter Emery, GED’69  
Benchmark Society Member

A retired science teacher, Walter has given to the Penn GSE Annual Fund for over forty years. His extraordinary loyalty helps Penn GSE have an extraordinary impact.

**EXTRAORDINARY  
IMPACT**

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  **PENN GSE**

[www.gse.upenn.edu/support](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support)